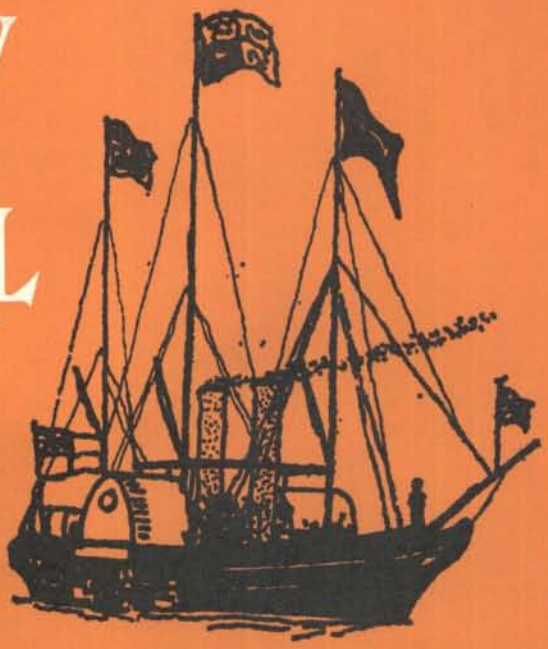
Encounter

March 1973 35p

A view of the ROYAL NAVY



JAMES MORRIS

Bureaucrat & Hippie

ANTHONY HARTLEY

And so to Bed (a story)

WILLIAM SANSOM

Who Wrote Stravinsky's Prose?

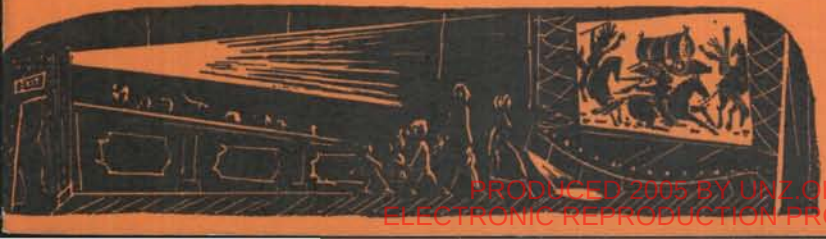
B. H. Haggin

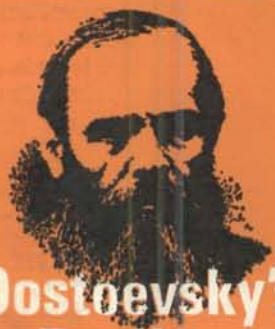
Where Have the Rebels Gone?

Nicholas Bagnall, Evelyn Cox

Blood & Cinema

ALEXANDER WALKER





Dostoevsky's Realism

Joseph Frank

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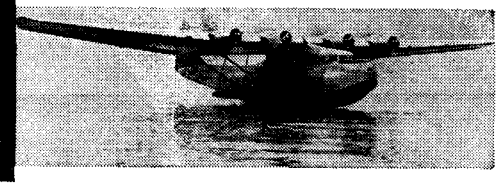

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Anthony Hartley

Neither Bureaucrat nor Hippie

On the Ideal of Man in a Mass Society

"Shall we arrive—as other prophets, perhaps as idle as their predecessors, assure us—at a more total and more profound social transformation than our fathers had either foreseen or wished. . . ? For myself I cannot say. I do not know when this long journey will finish. I am tired of taking deceptive banks of mist, one after another, for the shore, and I ask myself if this is solid land which we have sought for so long really exists or if our fate is not rather eternally to scour the sea! . . ."

TOCQUEVILLE[1]

THESE SENTENCES from Tocqueville's *Souvenirs* were written under the impact of the year of revolutions, 1848, and the seemingly endless political and social instability which had afflicted Europe since 1789. But they remain the classic expression of the vertigo which must possess all those who can bring themselves to contemplate the pace of contemporary social change. Industrial revolution has succeeded industrial revolution; electricity has replaced steam, and atomic energy coal; computers aid human brains whose processes of thought can themselves be conditioned by the use of drugs and the techniques of neuro-surgery.

It is no wonder that Tocqueville's prophets should still be with us to proclaim the shift to new forms of life—what the latest of them, Professor Zbigniew Brzezinski, has called the "technetronic society." It is no wonder too that this prospect should be as hallucinatory for us as it was for Tocqueville and perhaps even more frightening. For the 19th-century prophets at least had the courage of their optimism. Writing at the beginning of the 20th century Henry Adams could foresee the need for a "new social mind", but was also confident in man's adaptability:

> Thus far, since five or ten thousand years, the mind had successfully reacted, and nothing yet proved that it would fail to react . . . but it would need to jump.

Yet, in the final sentence of his autobiography, he expressed the hope that he and his friends might return to earth—in 1938—and "find a world that sensitive and timid natures could regard without a shudder. . . ." The choice of date was to belie his optimism.[2]

Now, for the first time in history, the possibility is emerging of man not merely transforming his environment, but also his own nature. Claude Lévi-Strauss has, indeed, accused psycho-analysts of unconsciously reorganising their patients' universe in function of their own theories, and he has compared their treatments to the techniques of the primitive sorcerer. Seen in this light, psycho-analysis can appear as a sort of regression to a world of magical dependence. But it is probable that in the future the means of conditioning human behaviour will be infinitely more powerful than those possessed by any witch-doctor. Physically speaking, the grafting of hearts, lungs, livers, kidneys and eyes is a sign that the construction of a man is no longer only something out of a horror film. But, even as this prospect opens somewhat uninvitingly before us, it nonetheless remains true that the advanced industrial societies of the late 20th century are singularly ill-equipped to decide upon what ideal pattern they would wish to build a man, supposing that such an operation became possible.

[1] *Alexis de Tocqueville,* Souvenirs *(Paris,* 1942*), p. 75; "Arriverons-nous comme nous l'assurent d'autres prophètes, peut-être aussi vains que leurs devanciers, à une transformation sociale plus complète et plus profonde que ne l'avaient prévue et voulue nos pères. . . .? Quant à moi, je ne puis le dire, j'ignore quand finira ce long voyage; je suis fatigué de prendre successivement pour le rivage des vapeurs trompeuses, et je me demande souvent si cette terre ferme que nous cherchons depuis si longtemps existe en effet, ou si notre destinée n'est pas plutôt de battre éternellement la mer! . . ."*

[2] *The Education of Henry Adams: An Autobiography* (Boston, 1918), pp. 498, 505.

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OVER THE LAST FIFTY YEARS the decay of religious belief has been followed at a respectable distance by the decay of 19th-century liberal humanism. The images of the Christian gentleman and of the agnostic humanitarian have been fractured, leaving behind them the shards of values which must now be incorporated into any new ideal of man—much as "pop" painters or sculptors use the fragments of artifacts to build their works. And, like the pieces of old china or tattered cloth combined into new patterns, the splintered values take on their meaning from the context in which they occur rather than from their past significance.

Thus, tolerance can be praised when it is required to mediate racial conflict, but is discarded in other social and political settings. The Puritan virtue of abstinence may be fashionably "progressive" when it is a question of rejecting the fruits of a consumer society, but is considered decidedly old-fashioned when it comes to sexual satisfaction. The individual qualities which tradition has handed down as essential parts of the equipment of ideal humanity have acquired an ambiguity in the process of transmission which has robbed them of their imperative message at the same time as it has dislodged them from the ethical structure of which they once formed part.

SUCH A SHATTERING of man's image was, no doubt, inherent in the evolution which has seen moral attitudes based first on belief—then, when belief had disappeared, on the ethical assertions of agnostic humanism—and, finally, merely on habit or some aesthetic criterion of good taste. But the disintegration of the Western liberal view of man has been accelerated by a relativism which made the values of the cultivated middle classes seem to be purely the result of historical accident or emotional repression. The impact of Marxism or Freudianism on the liberal humanist, no longer supported by religious conviction, has been to make it appear as though values carefully preserved in everyday life were not only the result of a subjective choice, but were also a *damnosa hereditas*—something of which to feel ashamed. And this guilt, generated by too sensitive a type of self-consciousness, has made it impossible for many of those who still hold to the traditional humanist view of man to defend opinions which they have become accustomed to regard as the corollary either of their own social position or else of their personal neurasthenia. The present ambivalence of liberal values, their apparent inability to resist even the somewhat clumsy dialectic of a Dr Marcuse, reflects an inner ambivalence in those holding them.

The liberal ideal of man had begun to sag at the knees long before it fell apart at the joints. And, in 1973, we are left with the question asked of Ezekiel: "Can these bones live?" Can something of the traditional Western view of man be carried over into the future? Can we expect that this tradition will be continued in some meaningful sense and not only through the persistence of residual characteristics so isolated as to lack significance? The questions are not without their importance. Communication with the past, contact with its cultural and ethical inheritance: these things require that a new age should not repudiate the ideals of its ancestors—the sage, the knight, the gentleman—but should acknowledge and build upon them.

AT FIRST SIGHT this preservation of continuity may not seem particularly likely. The ideal man of Western tradition has inevitably been an aristocratic individualist. This was, indeed, a function of his exemplary character for the mass of men. His moral decisions were personal decisions influenced certainly by the morality of his time, but largely unaffected by the opinion of those around him. He was his own casuist—at one extreme, Socrates facing his Athenian judges; at the other Corneille's hero proclaiming *"Je suis maître de moi comme de l'univers"*—rejecting any judgment save that of his peers and scorning the contingencies of misfortune, poverty, or death. This was an ideal not so much of the improvement of society as of an individual perfection which would be simultaneously an example to, and a judgment on, the society in which it existed. It was not an ideal of conformity to the social pattern, but one to which the social pattern was expected to adapt itself. Its manifestations were often fierce and uncompromising. It attached more importance to shadowy but emotionally charged concepts such as honour, dignity, fame or justice than to material circumstance.

In present-day industrial society such types of ideal man may seem out of place. Over a century-and-a-half a long line of books ranging from Tocqueville's *De la Démocratie en Amérique* (1835, 1840) through Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses* (1930) to William H.

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Whyte's *The Organisation Man* (1956) have pointed out the pressures towards conformity in an industrialised democracy and also the process of levelling-down to which these are likely to give rise. A highly bureaucratised mass society of consumers where the material possessions of life provide an easily interpreted scale of success, and the daily round of work offers few occasions for the exercise of the individual judgment does not afford much scope for the development of those aristocratic characteristics which, in the past, have informed the ideal types of western man. Professor David Riesman, in his study of *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), has written of the change in modern American society from the "inner-directed" to the "other-directed" man—that is, from the man whose decisions are in large part dictated by the independent exercise of his own judgment to the man who is preponderantly influenced by the opinion of the society surrounding him. The size of contemporary industrial organisation leaves little place for individual initiative, while it places more and more emphasis on team-work and cooperation within factory or office. The individualistic ethos is replaced by the so-called "social ethos" which deplores talent that is too brilliant, behaviour that is too ambitious, manners that are too caustic. (William Whyte entitled a chapter of his book "The Fight against Genius.") And to this conformist pattern of work corresponds the conformity of home life in the new American suburb—admirable in its intentions, frequently intolerable in its practice, sociable to the point of insanity and with little of the privacy traditionally associated with the word "home"—a domestic setting created specifically for the young executive and his family as their company switches them about from one end of the United States to another.

ALL THIS HAS BEEN RECOUNTED in fascinating and chilling detail by various American writers. In fact, so chilling are their accounts that it is hard not to suspect them of concealing the iron hand of the Puritan moralist under the smooth objectivity of the sociologist.

Clearly, the Organisation Man has not totally taken over the United States. He still has his critics who believe in older American values than the "social ethos" and whose prose takes on the plangency of the pulpit as they describe the new orthodoxy. Indeed, it could be maintained that he is a moralist's myth, unrecognisable in the comportment of any specific individual walking the streets of New York or San Francisco. As an idea, however, he exists; and it seems likely that he represents one ideal paradigm of a future type of man: the product of a highly bureaucratised industrial society which demands of its servants conformity, punctuality, and reliability, and has decided once and for all to turn its back on erratic brilliance.

The fact that he has not yet appeared in Western Europe in any very noticeable form does not necessarily invalidate this view. The influence of tradition in European life, and the unwillingness of most Europeans to move their homes at the behest of the Company, has inhibited the development of a type of man directly tailored to the requirements of industrial organisation. But the atmosphere of bureaucratic conformity and paternalism which surrounds some great European companies shows that the same pressures are there. What mitigates them is also the fact that business and its values have never played as major a role in the European consciousness as in the American. The service of the state has usually seemed more important—perhaps still does to most Europeans—and this service produces a different kind of bureaucratic mentality with less sense of soliciting others and more of being placed in authority over them. It would hardly be possible for members of a bureaucracy of civil servants to be quite as nice as Mr Whyte's Organisation Men. At the level of state power, reality keeps breaking in.

The Organisation Man is a significant figure, since his appearance in the United States does represent a (possibly unconscious) attempt by industrial society to fashion a type of man adapted to its needs. In years to come the adaptation may go further. Meanwhile the society described by Mr Whyte, and others, has a far-off resemblance to Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: the accounts of young executives and their families contentedly mingling in their new suburban rookeries recall the happy play of the Beta children who were so glad to be Beta children.

UNDOUBTEDLY ONE FEATURE of the century to come will be increasingly large-scale organisation of both manufacturing and service industries as well as of governmental administration. The Leviathans of modern life

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are not likely to fragment or vanish, nor will there be much change in their demands on their servants for qualities guaranteeing the optimum amount of bureaucratic excellence. It must be recognised, however, that many of these qualities run counter to well-established characteristics of human nature. Sobriety, punctuality, reliability do not come easily to a humanity, large sections of which have always been drunken or lazy or lecherous. The employees of the Organisation will conform, but conformity will impose a strain on them which may have to be compensated in other ways—perhaps by increased leisure permitting a mild addiction to hobbies, perhaps by a greater moral license bringing with it the nervous stimulation of a suburban Lupercal.

There is, indeed, already a contradiction in the view taken of man by the modern industrial organisation. On the one hand it expects of him *qua* employee what might be called the passive Puritan virtues. On the other, it encourages him *qua* consumer towards extravagance and thriftlessness. This contradiction could easily be transformed into a resolution of the clash between imperfect human nature and perfected industrial techniques. Regularity at work, orgiastic therapy off-duty has been in the past, after all, a familiar pattern for those occupations which, like the Army or Navy, submit their recruits to a severe daily discipline. Here, again, Aldous Huxley's picture of a society, in which rigid social discipline would be balanced by sexual freedom and conspicuous consumption, has anticipated the trends of the 20th-century life, even if the genetic control which he envisaged as a necessary condition of absolute social stability is still wanting.

YET, AS UNDER THE CRUSHING bureaucracy of the later Roman empire there were those who escaped from its toils to pray and meditate in the deserts of Egypt, so there are now signs of a desire to withdraw from the daily round of a devastatingly stable world. The Beatniks and Hippies, and Flower-children, and Diggers who have succeeded and merged with each other over the last few years probably express a genuine revulsion against the bureaucratic society.

But the alternative they offer to it is more apparent than real. The life of the Hippie, in fact, seems to be sort of negative in relation to the positive of the Organisation Man. There is common to both of them non-violence, conformity, and a "social ethos" within their particular circle. Both male and female Hippies are consumers, if only of beads and oddly cut garments. In the Hippie world as in that of the Organisation Man intellectual brilliance is at a discount. A vague attraction towards syncretic forms of religion is common to both, though the outward signs of it are somewhat more showy in Chelsea or Greenwich Village than in suburbia. In fact, if, as now seems to be the case in San Francisco, Hippies are increasingly manning the service industries (restaurants, post-offices, etc.), it could be maintained that they have done no more than carry a little further the contrast between leisure and work by firmly attaching all their own values to the former. Above all, the passivity of the Hippie and the Organisation Man towards the world around them separates them from the individualistic, aristocratic types of ideal man in the Western tradition. There is here little wish either to understand the world or to change it, and the arcane mumbling and maundering of Hippie language betray a positive desire to avoid the working processes of thought: an abhorrence of intellectual analysis essential for those who cannot question their own assumptions without dangerously undermining a stability felt to be based upon acceptance.

THUS, A JANUS-FACED FIGURE in which the crew-cut of the young executive blends into the elf-locks of the Hippie might seem the most likely choice for the ideal man of a future society. The weary executive would arrive home from his sandwich and Coca-Cola lunch to martinis, or marijuana and wife-swopping. His spouse would return from meetings of the Parent-Teacher Association or the pursuit of good works in the ghettos of Bedford-Stuyvesant or Oakland to the delights of *The Sensuous Woman* or some other of those sexual cookery-books which represent the pathetic last frontier of American belief in technology.[3] The "swinging" world of leisure would form a pendant to the eternally immobile world of work, and the ceremonial donning of wig and beads in the evening take on something of the dignity of those rituals through which a passage between different planes of existence is symbolised.

[3] "Sexual cookery-book" seems to be the *mot juste* for *The Sensuous Woman* (1971) which informs its female readers that chocolate cream is best eaten off appropriate portions of the male anatomy and that it can—naturally—be "fat-free" for those on a diet!

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Whether an institutionalised schizophrenia of this kind could work in practice is another question. In the 17th century it seems to have been the quarrelsomeness and licentiousness of the French aristocracy—vividly described in writers like Tallemant des Réaux—which were partly responsible for their losing the battle with a centralising monarchy served by the more stable bourgeoisie. Sobriety and reliability at work have usually been accompanied by corresponding behaviour at home. Will no IBM whizz-kid, accustomed to his nightly Lupercal, be tempted to light up a "joint" in his air-conditioned office or take a Bloody Mary or two with his desk lunch? Puritanism, one might think, is indivisible —an attitude of mind underlying the entire personality. Military discipline on duty and orgies off duty are one thing—no doubt, adapted to the temperament of professional soldiers. Orgiastic therapy as an answer to the repressions inflicted by industrial society is another—liable to result in high comedy as the grave upholders of "business values" take their daily or weekly dose of licence. And this is to leave aside the question of how family life is to be organised under such circumstances. The sexual revolution seems likely to end, ridiculously, in the punch line of an old Welsh dirty story: "Only made the kids laugh worse than ever. . . ." A Bohemianism of manners has been held to be the classic mode of existence for creative artists, but its compatibility with other social *milieux* is more than doubtful.

THERE IS, MOREOVER, something inherently improbable and also slightly repugnant in an ideal which dispenses with all the higher achievements and more subtle gifts of the human personality in the name of a purely utilitarian social stability. Who would be the heroes of such a society? Who would be its masters? The apparatus of modern government and industry can powerfully affect human life, but the values which it generates are clearly insufficient to found an authentic ideal of man. Furthermore, those who find themselves at the head of this structure and whose own behaviour is more brilliantly ruthless and individualistic than that recommended by any "social ethos", cannot throw up an ideal of man based upon a mythical version of themselves as such castes have done in the past, since, were they to do so, the contrast between their own *Weltanschauung* and that proposed to their subordinates in the organisation would become too striking.

Organisations can only exact real conformity from their employees by remaining anonymous. It is easier for the mass of men to love the Organisation than it is to love a flesh-and-blood employer, whose position excites envy and offends 20th-century egalitarian sentiment. In contemporary industrial society a technocratic caste rules by being "faceless" rather than trying to be exemplary in the manner of its forbears. For all the genuine ruthlessness of the corporate world, the general public is unlikely to be uplifted or diverted by the spectacle of chairmen of companies triumphing over the prostrate bodies of their adversaries.

WHERE, THEN, ARE WE TO LOOK for a future ideal of man? Not presumably in the primitive societies whose values have been effectively recommended by Claude Lévi-Strauss, nor in the peasant-guerrilla leader-cum-international adventurer dear to the hearts of the American and European "New Left." These images are symptoms of dissatisfaction with the lack of values in advanced industrial societies (a lack of values often called "Americanisation" by Europeans), but they provide no basis for filling the gap other than in terms of a romantic myth. No more than in the 18th century can a "noble savage" ideal of this kind be anything more than a refined product of intellectual sophistication, bringing with it cultural side-effects, but having little general significance.

In fact, it is questionable whether any future ideal of man can either merely accept or turn its back on the structures of modern industry and government and the human types generated by them. There are certainly plenty of rebellions against "the System" from aimless adolescent violence to the more politicised revolt of radical student movements. The latter, indeed, represent a far more traditional and, in many ways, more sympathetic form of rebellion than that of the Hippies. But they are faced with something of the same dilemma as the 19th-century anarchist groups whom they so closely resemble. Theirs is an almost religious attempt to change the quality of life. Their role has been described by two sympathetic American observers as being:

> . . . to search for a psychic community, in which one's own identity can be defined, social and personal relationships based on love can be established and can grow, unfettered by the cramping pressures of the careers and life styles so characteristic of America today.

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In the course of this quest the student radicals are led to affirm their "revolt against the post-War 'over-developed society', with its large bureaucracies in government, corporations, trade unions and universities" as well as their rejection of "affluence and its associated symbols."[4]

But in practice their rebellion seems to boil down to the establishment of an ideal community within the university itself, a kind of campus Pantisocracy. Such a "psychic community", however, depends for its very existence on the "over-developed society" which it rejects. A university run on the lines of "participatory democracy" would be an island artificially supported within modern industrial society and enjoying its spiritual liberty by permission of that society's masters. Theirs would be a way of life closed within a circle which at no point would intersect with that containing the major part of society. Like their anarchist ancestors the student radicals can assault "the System", but, since they do not accept the simple facts of modern social organisation as it at present exists, they are condemned to failure in their attempt to change it. Just as the Hippie's attempt to live the simple life to a large degree depends on the existence of the motor-car and tinned food, so the campus which student radicals hope to capture is a direct emanation of the advanced industrial society which they abhor.

THE PROBLEM OF DESCRIBING an ideal type of man adapted to the late 20th century is, therefore, one of finding for him a relationship to modern industrial society which neither isolates him from it nor submerges him in it. The element of individual freedom and aristocratic detachment which he requires to be exemplary must be preserved; but so must a real connection with the world around him. No doubt, he should be in that world but not of it. He should take part in its activities, but refuse to accept its values. What this implies is an exterior capacity to work the system—but an interior capacity to resist the imposition of the ethos arising out of it and to perpetuate other values, in particular those individual ones inherited from a traditional view of Western man. His ability to maintain this half-way position may enable him to modify the organisation world by the importation into it of his personal values. But it will in any case guarantee that he himself does not become a thrall to its cult of efficiency and conformity. He should in fact be able to take it or leave it, to accept it, but not to regard it as the only, or even the most important area of human life.

THIS METHOD OF PRESERVING a degree of personal liberty and dignity within a bureaucratised society prone to demand conformity to the standards of its own egocentric morality is, of course, fundamentally the same kind of stoical and sceptical response as is made by those who live under a firmly established totalitarian régime. Open resistance being counter-productive and acceptance out of the question, what remains is an inner dissent protecting the individual from the servility involved in positive collaboration with the régime and allowing him some feeling of personal choice in a situation where he would otherwise be powerless.

Like the totalitarian state, the future bureaucracy of industrial and state power is likely to be too powerful to be resisted and too pervasive in its demands for conformity to be accepted. Under the pressure of its rigidities the descendant of Western man, if he wishes to preserve his human dignity and escape the castration voluntarily accepted by the Organisation Man, will be forced back into himself. He will have to develop greater self-knowledge and a heightened consciousness of his historical position which, in turn, will endow him with the humour and the irony needed to keep his inner liberty. This liberty will enable him to judge modern industrial society (rather than be judged by it), to avoid some of its more outrageous intrusions, and possibly to deflect its evolution in a more human direction. He and his fellows, an increasing number of whom will become the servants of the vast bureaucracies of contemporary life, must retain enough sense of proportion to believe in what they are doing only as a hypothesis (a working hypothesis) and not as a pseudo-religion. Above all, they must not carry the values imposed from above at work into their private lives or accept any "social conditioning" on the part of the Organisation. They should be quite clear that a demand by state or company for a certain type of private behaviour on the part of the employees is an illegitimate invasion of privacy—and to be evaded by the exercise of elusiveness and low cunning.

[4] Paul Jacobs and Saul Landau, *The New Radicals: A report with documents.* (New York, 1966), pp. 4–5.

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OUR DECADENT UTILITARIANISM—which sees economic efficiency producing a higher standard of material living and therefore generating a contentment in the worker which, in turn, produces greater economic efficiency—offers no model of human life, only a mutilation. Moreover, it is also false even in its own assumptions.

> What [wrote Dr Johnson in *Rasselas*] . . . is to be expected of our pursuit of happiness, when we find the state of life to be such, that happiness itself is the cause of the misery.

Professor Jacques Ellul has recently denounced organised conformity in leisure as even more dangerous for the human spirit than conformity in factory or office, since

> during our leisure time, we have the impression that we are making our own decisions (when really they are dictated by publicity, etc.) and in this way we are much more completely integrated into the social unit. Thus leisure becomes the opposite of what we believe it to be.[5]

Against this temptation, Professor Ellul's remedies are the exercise of man's personal initiative and creative power and a critical sense directed towards the society around him. *Nosce teipsum* and *Homo faber est* (that is, Know Thyself and Man the Maker) would seem to be the devices under which Western man will have to struggle for his spiritual independence against the conditions of 20th-century industrial society. Of this struggle, happiness may be a by-product, but cannot possibly be the aim.

Thus, any future ideal of man depends upon a possibility of self-consciousness and self-expression which—from Socrates to Montaigne, from Pascal to Valéry—has been central to Western civilisation. The long journey of European man, from a hill in Attica to the straggling webs of steel and glass in which advanced industrial civilisation is embodied, has been marked by a balance between a daemonic impulse to creation and the self-questioning introspection that refined and humanised it. An enquiry into the nature of man like that conducted by the great French *moralistes* over more than three centuries was also a civilising process where the classification of human instincts went hand in glove with their control. The irony distilled from contemplation of the human situation served to mitigate, if not to prevent, the brutality inherent in Western man's explosive self-expression and the consequent transformation of his environment. From the Renaissance onwards an aristocratic ideal of man emphasised this element of balance which enabled the *honnête homme* to keep in check his more extreme and dangerous passions. Even the Romantic ideal of man saved by his thirst for new experience and new sensations found in art a transcendent element to which the kaleidoscope of human life could be related—"the still point of the turning world." Nor were the Romantics entirely wrong in this view of human destiny. In the solemn and magnificent procession of the years down which European man has discovered the universe and his own nature, every one of his avatars has left behind it some monument of the meeting between his spirit and the surrounding world. It is this succession of experience and its records which we call our civilisation.

THE ALTERNATIVES OPEN TO US in the age of the computer and memory-bank seem to be much what they always have been: total conformity to society, withdrawal or separation from it, and (finally) the road that has always been taken by those who have shaped the Western consciousness: *activa vita*, the constant effort to live social life in such a way as to bring to it the maximum of specifically personal values and to make it compatible with the fullest possible development of one's own personality. At present the pressures towards conformity are greater than they once were and the apparent rewards of obedience more glittering. But the modern Faust, though he may make his pact with some bureaucratic Mephistopheles, will also save his soul through a consuming thirst for creation and an ambition to experience all the possibilities of his own nature.

ULTIMATELY, THE STABLE WORLD of the Organisation Man or of the Hippie (his strange mirror-image) is unreal—unless modern techniques of psychiatry and neuro-surgery succeed in establishing a total control of human impulses. For the moment man's destiny is a tragic one, frequently ravaged by war, always conditioned by death and sickness. Men are violent, irrational creatures; attempts to make them anything else risk repressing the creative part of their spirit. Human dignity depends on the ability to look these facts in the face—facts which are incompatible with any perfected system of social conformity.

[5] "Reflections on Leisure", in *Interplay* (December 1967), p. 55.

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Human beings, we may hope, will remain passionate and bloody-minded, judged by their choice of enemies as well as by their choice of friends. Man's position as "a reed, but a thinking reed" has not changed since men first appeared on earth, nor is there any sign that technological progress will succeed in altering the condition of a being placed equidistant between misery and happiness or eliminating his *"misères de grand Seigneur."* It was once said that death destroys man, but that the idea of death saves him. Certainly, the bitter facts of man's existence serve as a safeguard for him against the cloying embraces of the Organisation of the deceitful nirvanas of sensuality or syncretic religiosity. Against the pangs of pain or the sharper pangs of loss the ideal man of the late 20th century, like his predecessors, can only be annealed by the traditional wisdom which tells him that his greatness consists in precisely that consciousness of suffering under which his head is bowed.

Perhaps, indeed, he can ignore the organisational tentacles that press upon him. He is safe from their contagion. Condemned to live tragically, heroically even, he can endure longer than they. For all their ant-like patterns of work or lemming-like rushes to the weekend beach, in the final analysis men are individualists and, like Rilke's old Danish aristocrat, ripen an individual death.

THE IDEAL PATTERN OF MAN, in the future as in the past, will be capable of regarding these conditions of his own existence and ordering them. And his peculiar greatness may come to be deduced from the very fact that he exists in the midst of a society where appallingly strong forces conspire to stifle his personal freedom. That he will succeed in defeating them we can hardly allow ourselves to doubt. Like the acolytes of some nascent religion we must have faith in him—because we have nothing else.

Hers and Mine

If you could wear words,
These might do the trick.
You could come to a grand evening party,
Dressed head to toe in poetry.

The Empress of the Turds,
The President of the Twenty-Fourth Republic,
Herr Mustikoff and the Mormon Ambassador would murmur,
"Who is that charmer?"

Mounseer Trousseau (et Cie.
Turnover millions of gold francs annually)
Would ask the way to your couturier,
And crab-like hands

Grab down through arc-lamps at your sleeves, your train.

In vain.
And Mounseer ask in vain.
There is no blue-print for the trade
Of you, or what are yours, yours only, and
I made.

Michael Burn

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William Sansom

And So to Bed

THE OLD MAN got down the steps of his club pretty well—you would not have thought he was seventy-six. He carried himself perhaps a little too stiffly, put his feet down too carefully, but no more than a man in his early sixties might do.

Only when he was off the broad steps of the club and on to the pavement did something of his real age show: now he walked with legs stiff and wide apart, like a man with prostate trouble, and his spine was so very straight it almost seemed to lean backwards. Lumbar trouble? Or a man of ingrown military mould? The latter. He had served many years in the army. He had also come through two major wars, and a few minor "incidents", unscathed —a fact of which he was oddly proud. He often talked of this in almost boasting terms to his fellow-members back behind the dark palatial windows of the great club. He was fond, too, of mentioning the many of his dead contemporaries whom he had "seen out." This he intended in no unkind way, he managed to involve a thankfulness in his satisfaction. "I've outlived most things", he would say, and his small blue eyes brightened with a kind of mischief.

He was liked for these attitudes. People sensed that they held an affirmative attack on the private beastliness of old age, of the body slowly falling apart, of old friends falling away, of the reiteration and saddening of the seasons and of the coming of loneliness.

Old Dicko's a lively one, they all thought, Dicko's not the kind to give in, plenty of fight left there. Arthur Bellington-Hughes-Meaux was the full name few could be bothered with, the relief of just Dick or even Dicko was also a lot to be thankful for. No one today knew him by his old nickname, 'Alf-a-mo, Arthur Meaux—for those that had had mostly died off. Dick was a later name, to do with "Clever Dick" and a harmless card-trick, and he was quite content to leave it at that.

He was popular. He could tell a good joke, reminisce well, rant with the others against this or that modern change, make at home in his Kensington flatlet an articulated wooden parrot for somebody's grand-niece. He was kind and understanding, as a man might be who had not only dispensed the lives but fathered the private troubles of the men beneath him—he would have been the best kind of officer. But always most likeable of all was the fact that he never complained of his age or health. The most he would say was: "I've got to go more carefully, of course." And add with a chuckle: "These days."

And careful he certainly was. Along the broad pavement he now kept well to the wall on the left. He waited until he got to a pedestrian traffic-crossing before making his way stiffly, with one hand raised, to the island and on then to the other side. Two streets away, on a similar crossing, a chauffeur too full of beer crashed the white and black lines, narrowly missing a young woman whose youth gave her the alertness to jump back in time. However, that was two streets away, unseen by and unknown to Dick.

On the other side of the road he took a short cut through a trafficless alley up to Piccadilly, along which he would finally catch his bus. He carried a stick, but seldom used this to lean on; he mostly swung it like a cane, as he had always done. But now in the quieter alley he did lean on it for a few paces.

The alley was empty but for two young men standing together further up. They watched old Dick as he came closer. One murmured something to the other, they both let their bodies slump as if casually. Or the better to

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move into action? Old Dick was thinking about his pension, half-commuted in earlier days—hell, he had enjoyed it at the time, no use crying over spilt milk. The young men were thinking of his wallet. A new club was opening that night, they dearly needed money. Trouble was, men always stowed their wallets away too carefully, buttoned them up on the hip perhaps, making it necessary to strike first and search afterwards. And perhaps put the boot in for silence's sake, or pleasure's.

As the old man came by they both rose from their slump and began to move in, becoming instantly bigger and in that second closer, so that old Dick had just time to say "Excuse me" before one of them from the corner of his eye caught sight of a girl crossing the alley at the other end and instinctively gave out a wolf whistle. The other twisted his head to look. The girl passed; and by then old Dick had passed too. The alley was long enough for them to follow him—but they had chosen that particular position because a branch alley just there gave a clear way of escape.

Was it only the girl? Or had they both moved a trifle slower because of the stick, simply the idea of a weapon in the old man's hand? No one will ever know, neither they nor the old man, who now went on his way, legs stiffly apart, the smart striped back of his jacket straight as a dummy, oblivious of anything at all but his own thoughts, still of his pension—"not crying over spilt milk, more like spilt scotch, I'd say."

Within twenty minutes the young men had got a wallet from another fellow, leaving him to lie on the alley's pavement, a crumpled guy figure, with two months in hospital ahead of him.

BUT BY THAT TIME old Dick was across another streetful of traffic and waiting safely for his bus. He stood for a while in a small queue. His had once been a life of taxis; but no longer now on the remains of his pension. He did not, though, resent this necessary economy; for one thing, he was seldom in a hurry, and for another he was always interested in the other people on the bus and enjoyed their proximity, which made for a sort of company, a small shared experience. What he did resent was the conductor's helping hand as he took the step up—he shrugged it off with a very curt thank-you. Muttering once again in his mind: "Still on m'pins, aren't I? Seen most things out, outlived more things than you've had hot dinners, blast you and thanks."

He was lucky to be going in that direction, a westerly one. Some minutes later, another bus on the same line as his, labelled with the same number but travelling east, skidded and grazed the side of a heavy lorry, not crashing badly but enough to splinter the glass windows, whose long sharp slivers cut into the faces of several passengers sitting along the near side. One man lost an eye, a woman had her carotid artery cut and had to be rushed to hospital. But this, of course, was scarcely connected with old Dick's progression home, in the other direction on another bus: though it was the kind of thing which, had he read about it in the paper, would have given him pause for thought. *His* bus route, *his* number. He might even have got things mixed, and congratulated himself on another lucky escape. Just as, a few weeks before, he had read of a number of cases of botulism occurring after lunch at a club neighbouring his own: lucky it wasn't us, he thought. And musing on this, he had even caught the self-congratulatory note in his feelings, and rebuked himself. Nothing to pat yourself on the back for, he had thought, more something to be thankful for. It was, after all, chance. Though it was perilously near his own club.

When he left the bus, he decided not to walk straight home but make a slight detour by no more than a couple of streets. He wanted to look again at an engraving he had seen entitled, he thought, *The Maori War.* And dated 1864. This was a long-forgotten war which he himself doubted he had ever heard of. Though he could not be too sure of his memory these days. He seemed to be forgetting the simplest things, like whether he had cut his toe-nails or not the night before: but by now he had cut them so many, many times in his life it scarcely seemed to matter. Though it was irritating not to remember. However, general knowledge was different, it usually stayed clear enough, hardly in the same category as reiterative toe-nail cutting. Then this Maori War?

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When he got to the shop, the engraving had gone from the window. He debated whether to go in and ask whether it had been sold. But if it were still there, he knew he could never afford it, nor even want it—so to trouble the shopkeeper would be dishonest? Yet, again, the shop was empty of customers —it would scarcely be much trouble? Though the shopkeeper might be doing, say, his accounts? He became annoyed with himself for this vacillating, told himself he was an over-conscientious old fool, and abruptly went for the handle of the door.

But at the last moment he thought of the encyclopaedia in the club. He could find out all about any old Maori War in that, in comfort. Moreover he saw through the glass of the door that the shop was served by no ancient antiquarian but a painted young girl in a fashionable little dress. This brought the further problem of being suspected as a "dirty old man", particularly since his query was false in the first place: another of the passing pitfalls of old age.

As he walked away from the shop he suddenly had to clutch at an iron railing and steady himself. He felt dizzy, and as if his legs might not follow the directions of his body—a feeling of absolute dislocation; an abrupt pain, almost a sensation of stiffening, hit at his chest about where the heart was. He stood there for a minute or two breathing very lightly and carefully. Why, he wondered, why? . . . it had happened once or twice before, over a long period back . . . he now put it down to a slight stress brought about by these suddenly conflicting thoughts and the little onrush of anger with himself at such indecision. Perhaps—his blood pressure? But a fairly recent check-up had cleared this. Still —better see the sawbones again, no point in risking things after all these long and careful years.

He started off again and once more safely crossed the last road home, carefully by a pedestrian crossing and holding his hand up as usual, although in fact there was no traffic. Except overhead where at that moment a large airliner crossed low and loud and a bank of black cloud suddenly darkened the sun, the first cloud of that summer's afternoon, western and rainfilled, making an abrupt warm winter evening of the day. You expected the street-lamps to go on.

He hurried the last few yards. It was going to come down in buckets. And hurrying he nearly forgot the left side of the second step up to the flats, where there was a loose tile; but he had complained about it enough, he always remembered it.

Just as he was always careful to shut his eyes hard as soon as he closed the front door behind him and stood in the half-dark of the hallway; after his eyes had been screwed shut, they opened again accustomed to lesser light, and he could see more easily where any newly delivered cartons might be, where the woman on the second floor had left her pram, or if there were any new letters on the floor—each envelope a miniature rug to slip on.

He knew the places where the carpet was badly frayed on the way upstairs. Nevertheless he kept his eyes down on it, in case there were new dangers. On that particular afternoon there was a new danger, and unseen—no hole in the carpet, but an old tack bared and dislodged so that it caught in the welt of his shoe and momentarily held him. He grasped for the banister, found it: but the effort tore the tack against the side of his shoe, he even heard it, and swore. Another visit to the cobbler? Better wait until he got upstairs to look at the damage. Once again he sighed and tried to make philosophic light of the matter—"Worse things happen at sea"—and climbed the remaining stairs to his first-floor landing.

Key in door. Door opened. Stick in umbrella-stand. Safely home.

He walked through to his sitting-room and turned on the light.

THROUGH THE WINDOW lay brown and green London back-gardens. Separated by brick walls, they looked from above like so many open cattle pens of green growth, some neat, some littered, some paved in greening concrete. Nearly opposite, a man in one garden stood looking up at the backs of the row of houses where old Dick stood. He was at that moment looking exactly up at the old man, who never in fact saw him, nor saw how he turned away as soon as the light went on.

It was the time of summer holidays. Many people were away. So that it was also a busy time for housebreakers. Could that man have

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been studying the housebacks for a likely flat to enter? It was very possible. Later that night, one of the first floor flats in the row was in fact burgled. The sole occupant, an elderly woman who economised on light, was not maltreated, but sufficiently frightened to suffer weeks later, for no particular reason but an unfamiliar noise, a serious heart attack.

A Mrs Ampleforth had visited the old man's flat when he was out. She came twice a week to clean for him. This was a great help, though afterwards he always had to spend some time putting things back in their right places, since the lady had her own ideas as to where this or that should be kept, and also would purposely leave a scrubbing brush out, or a lamp in a different position, to show how thoroughly she had been at work.

That morning she had left a broom at an angle in a kitchen corner. This old Dick spotted immediately, and put away in a cupboard—he could easily have tripped over it, had he been intent, say, on putting a pie or some kippers in the refrigerator. But what he did not spot was a thick patch of waxen floor polish which Mrs Ampleforth had let fall from her bottle. In better light, it might have shown up: but not now. And old Dick's foot approached it close as he went on fiddling with a necessary few things about the little kitchen.

But his foot never touched it. In fact, after a fairly pleasant evening with the television and a book, he slept peacefully the whole night through, as he was to do each night for the next few years of his life; at the end of which he died, probably just as peacefully, in his sleep.

Tutankhamun

That could be me lying there
Surrounded by furniture,
My interest vested in
The persistence of objects,
An affectionate household;
The surrender of the bolt,
The wheeze of dusty hinges
Almost pleasurable
After the prolonged slumber
At my permanent address;
Cerements and substance
A sensational disclosure—
My various faces
Upside down in the spoons.

Michael Longley

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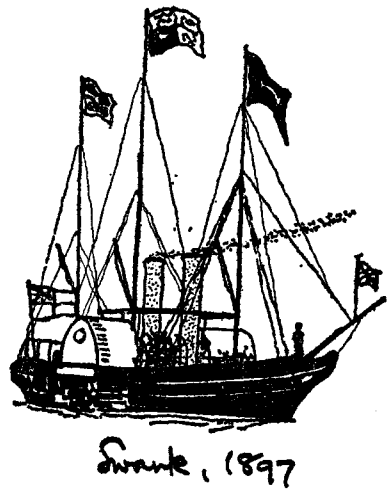
James Morris

A View of the Royal Navy



1. The Naval Possession

THE EMPTIEST PLACE in Britain is Scapa Flow in Orkney: partly because the great sea loch is supremely desolate in itself, its treeless islands so forlorn, its winds so unforgiving, but chiefly because in history's eye it is permanently crowded. Here within living memory there lay at its moorings the most powerful single weapon of war in the world, the arbiter of Europe and the proudest emblem of British authority: the main battlefleet of the Royal Navy.

Ask anyone who saw the fleet lying there, Grand Fleet in the first World War, Home Fleet in the second, and see how deeply emotional is the response. It stirs the heart still even at second-hand: the sunset bugle sounding from ship to ship across the loch—the destroyers sweeping in through Switha Sound—laughter from the Kirkwall liberty boat, and thump of steam-hammers from the Lyness yard—battleships standing out to Pentland Firth, "like giants bent in anxious thought", or carriers steaming in through Hoxa from the Russian convoys—the bustle of launches, tugs, lighters, pinnaces—the blare of a Marine band somewhere, and the flutter of a hundred ensigns, and the frothy consequence of an Admiral's barge, streaming across to *Renown* or *Duke of York*—all beneath that lifeless grey sky of the north, like some ritual assembly among the islands. Even now, on the shores of an empty Scapa, one may still sense the consequence of the place, the skill of seamanship and confidence of tradition that was once concentrated there, and the accumulation of emotion, part arrogance, part pride, part affection, which lay like a miasma around the fleet. "Nothing in the world like it", the old men say, "nothing like the old Navy in the old days, no ships like the old QEs, never shipmates like the old ones, never another admiral like Beatty or Bruce Fraser, never a navy like the old Royal Navy, when England was really England! . . ."

In the era of the British climax, whose last years the middle-aged can remember, the Royal Navy was the supreme symbol of patriotism. The Royal Navy was British and Best. The Royal Navy Always Travelled First Class. It was the Navy which had made Britain great, guaranteeing the island immunity and giving its people the freedom of imperial action; in return the Navy received a loyalty given no other department of State. A generation of British children grew up with the names of British battleships on the ribbons of their sailor hats, and a whole body of *genre* art—pottery, samplers, ballads, caricatures—was created around the images of the Royal Navy. The service itself assumed an anthromoporphic character—hard-drinking but always alert, eccentric but superbly professional, breezy, naughty, posh, kindly, Nelsonically ready to disobey an order in a good cause, or blow any number of deserving foreigners out of the water. To Britons and to foreigners alike, in the meridian years of Empire the Royal Navy *was* Britain, and the truest national anthem was not *God Save The Queen,* but Thomson's *Rule Britannia*—or perhaps *Heart of Oak*, which David Garrick wrote to celebrate the naval victory of Quiberon Bay:

Heart of oak are our ships,
Heart of oak are our men:
We always are ready;
Steady, boys, steady;
We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again.

THE ROYAL NAVY NO LONGER commands these passions. Disillusioned with power, immune to romance, profoundly averse to every association of war, the British nation has forgotten, even disowned, its Navy. People are inclined to think it no longer exists, or assume it to be so preposterously outnumbered by the Russian and American fleets as to be meaningless. The

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admiral-warship ratio has become a music-hall joke. Trappings of magnificence are out of fashion, and national self-esteem, as it was exemplified by the spectacle of Scapa Flow, has come to mean something evil. Even the island condition of the British, which has made them strange and special in the world, is assiduously denied.

But the Navy is still there, and still forms, whether we wish it or not, an essential part of life's fabric in Britain, so closely interwoven with our past as with our present that it truly belongs to all of us, a common possession like the landscape itself, or the law, or perhaps some universal folk custom. In this long article I have tried to evoke something of the fascination of this property, and to trace its organic position in the affairs of our society. I have written it *con amore*. I have loved the Navy all my life, and believe it to be one of the most revealing artifacts of the haphazard British genius, sprung directly from our deepest national needs and instincts. In the course of the job I happened to drive straight from HMS *Antrim*, a new guided-missile destroyer lying in Portsmouth Dockyard, to Peter Brook's production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—immediately from the missile-men to the fairies, from the gas turbines to the play-within-the-play, from Captain Hollins RN to Oberon himself in the bewitched deep of the forest. It might be thought a disconcerting transition, but I did not find it so: I thought the two performances had much in common, and which moved me more, which was the more exciting and high-spirited and contemporary and elegant, I found it impossible to decide. For me the Royal Navy remains the Shakespeare of our institutions.

2. Navy Places

THE BRITISH USED TO BE FOND of calling themselves The Island Race, but for centuries they were not noticeably more maritime than other nations. To them as to everyone else, the sea was generally a last resort. Though nobody in these islands lives more than 70 miles from the sea, still throughout our history only a small minority of Britons has ever willingly "used the sea" for a trade.

The Royal Navy evolved gradually, out of a reluctant background. It has no founding date, and no specific founding father. Legend used to say that King Alfred began it—Thomson was celebrating this myth in *Rule Britannia*—and more scholarly theories have variously postulated Edward III, or Henry V, or Henry VII. But it really had no exact beginning, and even the Navy itself, which loves anniversaries, is unable to commemorate its own origins with any centenary banquet or wardroom spree. The Navy grew like a limb of the nation. In the early days the merchant service and the King's navy were indistinguishable, ships and sailors being the same in both, but in mediaeval times there arose the convention that a monarch had the right to call upon his sea-going subjects for their help in the defence of the realm. It was a feudal custom, like the right of a knight to muster his tenants, and because of it there came into being, in certain parts of the kingdom, the beginnings of a naval tradition.

The first Navy places in England, the earliest predecessors of Portsmouth and Devonport, were the Channel ports of Kent and Sussex—the Cinque Ports, with the Ancient Towns of Rye and Winchelsea. The opening page of the Domesday Book decrees that the port of Dover, in return for specified privileges, must provide 20 ships annually for 15 days in the King's service. The Cinque Ports as a whole were required to supply 57 ships, and these vessels of the south-east formed in effect the English Navy of the Middle Ages. It is in one of their minuscule home ports, most of them ports no longer, or frequented only by golfer-yachtsmen with Jags and plastic dinghies, that one may best sense the immense antiquity of the British naval connection.

Take Rye for instance, which is built in Hobbitesque silhouette on a hill above the sea, its tumbled streets falling away from the tower of St Mary's precipitously through the town gates to the estuary below. It is a crannied, pebble-cobbled, half-timbered, weather-boarded, low-beamed, tangled kind of town, like a knobbly protrusion of its own hillock: and I doubt if there has ever been a time, for at least 700 years, when Rye has not had some direct association with the Royal Navy. During 28 generations, we may reasonably assume, some house in this little town, some family on the hill, has had a man away in the naval service. It is a genteel tea-shop town now, but it used to be very rough indeed: a community of fishermen and smugglers, intermittently engaged in private wars with the French, inbred and suspicious. In the 13th century it provided five ships annually for the King's service, manned by 107 sailors, and in every war since then Rye men have served with the Royal Navy, and the little estuary of the Rother has sheltered the Navy's warships—cogs, pinnaces, frigates, MTBs.

With these ruffianly South Coast fleets at his command, King John was able to make the first overt claim to a special British status at sea: he splendidly and presumptuously demanded that his ships should be saluted by foreign vessels anywhere in the Narrow Seas (foreigners thought

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it a preposterous claim, until under Cromwell it sparked the wars with the Dutch). Ever since then the Royal Navy has been predominantly a service of southern Englishmen. As the national interest shifted from the Channel to the Atlantic, the naval emphasis moved from the south-east to the West Country, and the Royal Navy acquired a Devon accent it has never entirely lost: and when the impressment system was devised, it was the ports of the south—London, Bristol, Plymouth, Portsmouth, that were most familiar with the regulating captain and his press gangs, stalking the dock streets in search of likely candidates, or presiding boozily over their ale-house rendezvous. There are many places in southern Britain still haunted by the shades of the gangers. One may hear their footfalls along the cobbles of King Street in Bristol, where the gables of the Llandoger Trow still stand crookedly above the Floating Harbour, and the slave captains, the gangers and the crimps used to lie in competitive wait for the unwary; or in the Barbican area of Plymouth, now fulsomely done up in pastel shades in honour of the Pilgrim Fathers, once a boisterous and horny seamen's quarter; or in the surviving riverside pubs of London. the few not yet corrupted with iced beer and packeted scampi, in whose low smoky saloons the Navy's recruiters were, for several centuries, familiar neighbourhood figures.

In wartime the Navy cast its net wider, and the press gangs, too, were less fastidious in their choice. In theory only those who "used the sea" professionally were liable to impressment, but over the years all sorts of Englishmen found themselves on board the King's ships—tailors, butchers, farm boys, paupers handed over by local authorities, even the odd lawyer or protesting apothecary. The Lord Mayor of London, proceeding upstream to the City one 17th-century day, found his ceremonial barge boarded by a press gang and all his liveried bargemen forcibly recruited. Dr Johnson, who loathed the sea, was much distressed when he thought his Jamaican servant Francis Barber had been pressed (in fact he had volunteered, but when told that some people actually *liked* being sailors, "I cannot account for that", said the Doctor testily, "any more than I can account for other strange perversions of the imagination").

BY VICTORIAN DAYS the Navy was no longer exclusively the concern of certain southern coastal regions. The vast expansion of the Napoleonic wars had brought men in from every part of the islands, and made it far more a national institution than ever before. Many Clydesmen took to the naval service, many Liverpudlians, many southern Irishmen: in both World Wars the population of Castletownshend in County Cork, for example, volunteered almost to a man for the Royal Navy, and the village became virtually a naval settlement—in the 1920s a Castletownshend man was the naval commander at Cork, and destroyers used to lie in the little haven below the village as familiarly as private yachts. Very few towns in the whole of Great Britain do not have their naval veterans now, making the texture of the naval connection unsuspectedly thick, like a Masonic fraternity: the Navy's latest recruiting figures show that today's seamen come in roughly equal proportions from every part of the country (in 1971 157 signed on at Bristol, but 230 at Birmingham; 162 at Newcastle, but 163 at Sheffield).

Still, by the nature of things some parts of Britain remain more quintessentially Navy than others: if the great wars, Napoleonic to Hitlerian, made sailors of us all, in peacetime the Navy tends to revert to its origins, withdrawing to its vocational seclusion and its waterside enclaves. In Britain today there are five principal naval bases—Portsmouth, Plymouth, Chatham, Rosyth on the Forth and Faslane on the Clyde. In each of these places the Navy remains inescapable, not merely an important employer, but a presence and an influence, like the cathedral at Salisbury, or Oxford's university. Of them all the most headily evocative is Plymouth, which is civically obsessed with those blessed Pilgrims, but which remains even now to most Britons synonymous with the Navy.

PLYMOUTH SOUND seems to me one of the grand sights of Europe, and to stand on the Hoe on a gusty sunny morning, when the rope is slapping the flagstaff and the gulls are whirled and tossed squawking about the sky, is one of the most exhilarating experiences of all travel. Below you the haven lies flecked between its headlands, overlooked by Smeeton's superannuated Eddystone light, and protected by John Rennie's breakwater, and before the mind's eye there passes a pageant of naval occasions. The Navy's ships have been moving in and out of this bay without a break since the time of King John. From here the privateers set out for the Spanish Main, Drake sailed for Cadiz, Blake for the Dutch wars, Cook for New Zealand, Sturdee for the Falklands. In 1357 the blind and captive King of France was brought into the Sound: in 1815 HMS *Bellerophon* anchored inside the breakwater with the prisoner Napoleon on board. The Germans bombed Plymouth so thoroughly in the last War that one bomb actually fell smack on the pavilion of the Promenade Pier, a favourite place of sailors' dalliance: but though the centre

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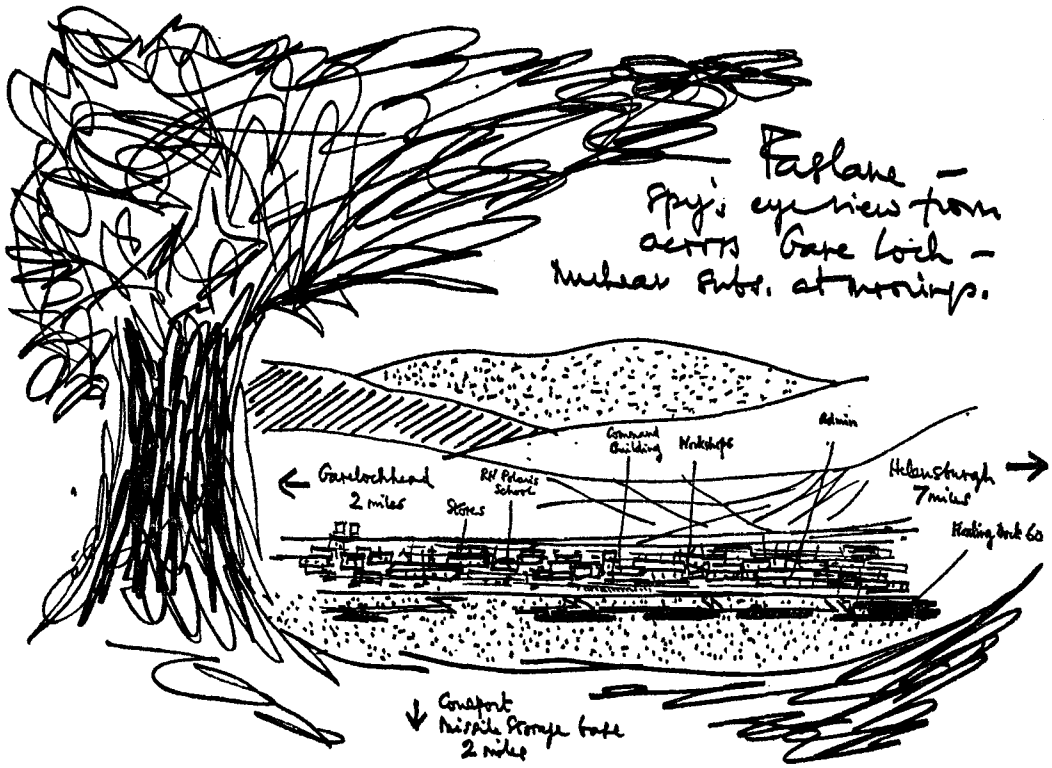
of the city is all new, and mostly nasty, still the city's flavour remains ineradicably naval. The frigates still lie in pale grey clusters against the Devon green, the White Ensign still flies from the yard-arm outside Admiralty House, and the sailors still swagger down Union Street to the dockyard (or drive their Cortinas, anyway, embellished with exhortatory and self-satisfied stickers—Fly Navy, or Happiness is Ship-Shape).

When I was last there I drove around to Cremyll, on the opposite shore of the Sound, where the ferry crosses to Admiral's Hard and the Victualling Yard: and as I stood meditatively there looking across to Devonport in the sunshine, swiftly and smoothly around the marker buoy came a frigate, flags streaming, crew fallen in on deck for entering harbour—delicately in the bright sea-light past Stonehouse and Mutton Creek, past the painted figurehead of the *Royal William* on the foreshore, past the graceful gazebo erected to commemorate the visit of George III, past the cranes and slips and chimneys of the North Yards, where they have built 250 ships for the Royal Navy and repaired thousands more, past the naval barracks and the tanker jetty, until she was out of sight around Tor Point, back in the reaches of Hamoaze Creek where the Navy's ships have sheltered and refitted, come war come peace, since the first half of the 13th century.

3. Navy People

FOREIGN SAILORS, in our great-grandfathers' day, looked comically inept to British eyes: moustachioed Frenchmen, side-burned Italians, ramrod Germans—even the American sailors of the time, though unquestionably seamanlike, did look funny in their peculiar Cape Cod beards. The Victorian British were accustomed to suppose that theirs were the only proper seamen, an opinion fortified by the circumstance that for a century the Royal Navy never had to fight an enemy anything like its own size. This was the Sailor Race, the Island People, and Britain not only ruled the waves, but set the standard and the style of all things to do with the sea.

In fact the British sense of affinity with the oceans has been intermittent. At this moment, for instance, the nation has half convinced itself that its interests are no more oceanic than those of France or Germany, and the Navy does not often enter our thoughts or conversations. Most of us do not often meet a sailor; we seldom see a warship; we know few families with sons in the Navy. Numerically the Americans are far more naval than the British. The United States Navy, at 700,000 men, represents one sailor per 290 head of population. The British, at 98,000, represents one per 550 head—about the same as the Russian proportion. It is true that the Royal



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Navy is an all-volunteer force, by far the largest in existence. Even so, this is probably the lowest ratio in these islands since 1835, when the fleets were dispersed after the French wars: and that one citizen in 550, squeezed out of the affluent populace by all the combined pressures of publicity, sentiment, family attachment, even occasional despair, represents the very last drop of naval instinct at present active among the Sailor Race.

"No man will be a sailor who has contrivance enough to get himself into a jail", Dr Johnson pronounced. "A man in a jail has more room, better food and commonly better company." He boarded a warship only once in his life, impertinently remarking as he left HMS *Ramillies* "Have the goodness to tell the First Lieutenant that I beg he will leave off the practice of swearing": but as usual he was epigrammatising a popular opinion. In most periods of our past the sailor's life held no romance for the British, and the reputation of the sailor was generally disreputable. Almost the first picture we have of Jack is Chaucer's portrait of his Shipman—"a good felawe" perhaps, skilful at his craft and toughened by sea and sun, but morally distinctly dubious. "Of nyce conscience took he no keep." He smuggled incorrigibly, and if he took prisoners in war "by water he sente them hoom, to every lond"—in other words, he drowned them. Hakluyt, in the 16th century, described the English seaman as "the most infamous for outrageous, common and daily piracies"; John Wesley, preaching in Rye in 1773, found the seamen willing enough to hear the good word, "but they will not part from the accursed thing, smuggling"; almost until our own times the Navy's particular ports were among the toughest and sleaziest towns on earth—from Malta's Gut to Singapore's Chinatown, the British sailor boozed, whored, and brawled his progress through the centuries in unseemly parade. When a ship of Nelson's Navy came home from abroad, boatloads of prostitutes sailed down the Solent or through the Sound to meet her, and for days afterwards her decks were scenes of Hogarthian indulgence — half-dressed women, drunken fiddlers, copulations in every hammock and through it all the chaste Jewish pedlars, imperturbably relieving Jack of his pay before he even got ashore.

Socially the mariner, officer or man, was for centuries at rock-bottom. The old Navy was no place for refinement—it was, said the progressive Admiral Vernon in the early 18th century, "defrauded by injustice, manned by violence, and maintained by cruelty." Until the 19th century discipline was vicious, food was terrible, conditions were squalid, and the lives of many ordinary seamen consisted of a hopeless alternation between desertion, recapture, and flogging. Louts and riff-raff of every sort found themselves, by choice or compulsion, between the decks of the men-of-war. Many were foreigners, especially in war-time—Americans and Scandinavians in particular. There were 48 foreigners on the *Victory* at Trafalgar, and when Sir Charles Napier took a fleet into the Baltic in the Crimean war, he was casually advised by the Admiralty to pick up some Norwegian seamen on the way through. When the leadership was right and the cause popular, these rag-bag crews fought magnificently, but desertions were so frequent that sometimes even the press gangs could not keep up. Nelson estimated that 42,000 men deserted from the Royal Navy during the French wars: British deserters guided de Ruyter up the Medway in 1667, and British deserters were among the best seamen in the American Navy in the war of 1812.

IT WAS HARDLY A FASHIONABLE CALLING for officers, either. The Elizabethan seadogs who gave a transient glamour to the trade were mostly of the middle classes—Drake began as a boy on a Thames coaster, Raleigh was the son of a country squire, the Hawkins family were well-known Plymouth merchants. In the Restoration Navy there were numbers of excessively smart and foppish captains, who boarded their ships to the contumely of the "tarpaulins" followed by trains of valets, relatives and miscellaneous dependants: but when a permanent corps of officers came into being, and the naval profession proper was established, they were mostly men of the lesser gentry who joined it. In time a naval hierarchy arose, and great family names became associated with the Navy; but even so officers from the aristocracy stood out against a bourgeois background. Sir Walter Elliott of *Persuasion* doubted if an Admiral would be a proper tenant for Kellynch Hall, the Navy being "the means of bringing persons of obscure birth into undue distinction, and raising men to honours which their fathers and grandfathers never dreamt of. . . ." Queen Victoria herself, as a young hostess, wondered if it were quite the thing to invite naval men to the same table as officers of her Guards regiments.

In the long run Nelson changed all this. His example, his inspiration and his success transformed the Navy's reputation, and made it the British cynosure: after Trafalgar the first ceramic sailors entwined in oak trees appeared before a fawning public, and Jack in his straw hat, his smock, and his baggy trousers became a beloved folk-figure. Sir Walter Elliott may have viewed the Navy with distaste, but the rest of Jane

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Austen's Bath doted on the naval officers who frequented it—not only were they handsome and charming, but they had often amassed sizeable fortunes in prize money. Trafalgar, which established Britain's supremacy at sea and opened the way to imperial glory, also established the legend of the British Navy, which was to sustain Britain's pride, and overawe Britain's enemies, from that day almost to this.

Socially the Navy was now formalised, or perhaps fossilised, into an allegorical pattern: jolly rakish ratings forward, officers, gentlemen and eccentrics aft. In the 1860s a long-service scheme was started for ratings, making the Navy for the first time a decent career for the lower deck: officers' entry was, until 1904, by an unwritten code of preference and patronage—when the future Lord Fisher was examined for naval entry in 1854, nominated by the last of Nelson's captains, all he had to do was jump naked over a chair (for fitness) and write out the Lord's Prayer (for education and moral fibre). By the end of the 19th century the corps of officers had become a great deal grander: its executive branch, in 1897, included two princes, two dukes, a viscount, a count, an earl, four lords by courtesy, eight baronets and 35 honourables. Royal scions now entered the service as part of their education and Queen Victoria in her old age delighted in naval company (though she never forgave the Admiralty for declining to make dear Albert an Admiral of the Fleet). "What are you all laughing about?" she once asked at the dinner-table, and Fisher at the other end was sure enough of his status to reply: "I was telling Lady Ely, Ma'am, that I had enough flannel round my tummy to go all around this room."

Life aboard the large ships of the fleet now became ritually stylised. Never were instruments of war so gleaming with brass, so brilliant of paintwork, so stately with ensigns and bugle-calls and white canvas. The fleet which, in 1901, King Edward VII reviewed at Spithead at the close of the Victorian era offered perhaps the most gorgeous spectacle of power Europe has ever seen: the ships were painted in black, white and yellow, and fluttered all over with signal flags and pennants, and from their topmasts flew gigantic White Ensigns and crosses of St George, and their crews jauntily lined the decks, and their officers majestically saluted from their high bridges, and through the line of warships came the King of England in his royal yacht, the largest steam yacht in the world—standard at the mainmast, duty officers at attention on the foredeck, a wispy stream of smoke from two bright yellow funnels, and beneath the cheers of the assembled crews and the successive melodies of the battleship bands, the soft greased thump of reciprocating engines from impeccable engine-rooms below.

TO MANY PEOPLE ALL THIS remains the Royal Navy still—dinner jackets in the wardroom, make-and-mend on slung hammocks between decks. It is not so. The Royal Navy has always accurately reflected the social climate of the day, and the service is no more than a mirror of the national condition. In the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich they preserve a big black chest, iron-bound and fitted with a heavily-sprung coin-slot: this is the Chatham Chest, the repository of the original compulsory medical insurance scheme, into whose slot throughout the 17th century the monthly sixpences of the Navy's seamen were dropped (sometimes to be salted away by corrupt officials, and once to be stolen by thieves). Until the Industrial Revolution the Navy was the most elaborate organisation in the country, a model for technical development. Today it is, as a social organism, if not in advance of society as a whole, at least far more progressive than the nation generally supposes. The Victorian Navy, with its fashionable admirals and lofty eccentricities, was a true paradigm of the era, even to the ornate cushioned fittings, upright pianos, and Oxford frames of its captains' cabins. The Royal Navy today, scoured by social change and the decline of national power, illustrates modern Britain no less exactly.

Its officers now come from every kind of background. Some join after taking a university degree, some rise from the lower deck, most go through the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth in Devon. I went down there to have a look at them, and found them almost disconcertingly contemporary. The college stands in Edwardian opulence on a hillside above the River Dart, and is replete with ship models and portraits of admirals and diagrams of capstans; and the young gentlemen unashamedly honour all those dogmas of team spirit, stiff upper lip, short back and sides which, though unfashionable in the commonalty, remain obviously sensible in the running of a ship at sea: but the swells who stood on the bridges of *Majestic* or *Goliath* as King Edward sailed by would hardly find themselves at home among their successors here. Today's Dartmouth cadet is above all classless—he talks in a classless inflexion, he has a classless kind of face, he thinks in classless terms, and it is almost impossible to guess whether he comes from secondary modern or nursery of kings. In fact only 15% of today's cadets come from public schools, and when a cadet has a naval connection, as many do, it is often by way of the lower deck. Dartmouth is considerably less posh

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than Sandhurst, if schools are the gauge of poshness, and nothing in the modern Navy approaches the social sheen of one of the more exclusive British armoured cavalry regiments, or the Brigade of Guards.

I thought the Dartmouth atmosphere impressively dedicated, if a trifle saltless. They do not, to my eye, look a very dashing lot of young men, and I rather missed the odd rebellious scowl or flagrancy—the drop-out rate is apparently unaffected by the age of Aquarius, and has remained more or less constant for years. But the Navy no longer cherishes fire-eaters or mavericks, and is at pains to produce officers of all-round competence and liberal interests. Cadets no longer go to Dartmouth at 13, as they did before the war; 17 is the youngest entry age, and the Dartmouth curriculum is much wider than it used to be. The Drama Society had just performed *The Frogs* of Aristophanes when I was there, six languages are taught in the language laboratory, and if the average British naval officer today is less flamboyant or individualist than his Edwardian predecessors, he is certainly far better educated.

The naval rating has also greatly changed since the last war. He is better educated too, and much more sophisticated. Most ratings now sign on for short engagements, and they remain closer to civilian life than their predecessors. Their jobs are far more demanding, of course. Modern warships are stuffed with electronics, computers, gas turbines, nuclear propellants, and the modern seaman must be adaptable and intelligent enough to master very complex technical skills. The sailors one meets nowadays on Her Majesty's ships look like young engineers, or draughtsmen, or perhaps TV cameramen—on the whole a more striking collection of people, I thought, than their officers, and wonderfully assured. The old salt has almost vanished, only a few late and much admired specimens surviving among elderly petty officers or ships' cooks: today's sailors are far more urbane and trendy, and looked most at home of all, it seemed to me, transmitting pop discs over ships' internal radio systems.

The relationship between officer and man has obviously received some awkward jars, in the course of this social convulsion. The officer is no longer, as he once was, divinely or anthropologically the superior of his men. No longer will bosuns reverentially say of departed captains, as one Edwardian bosun said when a seagull defecated on his quarterdeck, "That could never 'ave 'appened in Sir Robert's day." The gulf between officers and men is now almost entirely professional—a senior naval captain of the old school told me he thought the best-mannered messes in the modern Navy now to be those of the petty officers. Before very long, I suspect, there will be no absolute distinction between upper and lower deck, ranks merely progressing continuously from ordinary seaman to Admiral of the Fleet. The gap between officer and rating is increasingly the gap between executive and technician—certainly not between management and employee, still less (as it sometimes literally was in earlier days) between landlord and tenant.

THE NAVY'S DISCIPLINE, though often violently enforced, has seldom been inflexible, perhaps because the confinement of life at sea breaks down inhibitions and exposes false values. Thus we read of Howe, at the battle of Ushant in 1793, being warned by his helmsman that if they hold their course they will collide with the French flagship. "What's that to you, sir?" says the Admiral testily. "Damned if I care if you dont", is the seaman's unexpected reply. "I'll take you near enough to singe your black whiskers!" Familiarities of this kind even in the Victorian Navy seem to have been more common than they have ever been in the Army or the RAF: they remind me of the landlord-serf relationship in the Russian novels, and perhaps similarly sprang from an underlying sense of community.

Even so, I find it a curious experience to visit a ship of the Royal Navy nowadays. Celestial though the captain remains in his detachment, attended by his busy secretary and sustained by immediate stewards, still the order of the ship's company seems remarkably relaxed. There is none of that abrupt stiffening of the muscles that overcomes enlisted men of the United States Navy in the presence of an officer. The Royal Navy's ratings scarcely spring to their feet, when a lieutenant passes by: on the contrary, they seem almost ready to offer him a cigarette and call him Joe. I found this disconcerting at first: but no officer I talked to, however traditionalist, complained of waning discipline, and I came to think that it represented no more than a necessary compromise. In a volunteer force drawn from a prosperous and highly advanced community, common sense must be the keynote of discipline. At Dartmouth they carefully explain to cadets, before they bawl them out on the parade ground, why drill is useful to a naval officer: and ratings too demand, and get, treatment that makes demonstrable sense to a generation that has learnt to ask the reason why.

4. On Style

CHURCHILL, the only Prime Minister to have a warship named for him, once sneered in an uncharacteristic moment that the Royal Navy's traditions consisted only of "sodomy,

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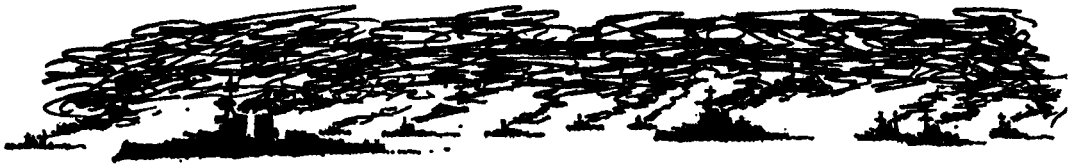
rum, and the lash." In a crude shorthand way he was right, for the Royal Navy's legend is compounded largely of sensual emotionalism ("Kiss me, Hardy"), carnal ebullience (the original rum ration was a pint a day), and ruthless absolutism ("I do not say the French cannot come," declared St Vincent, "I only say they cannot come by sea"). All these elements, plus lashings of swank and thick deposits of experience, compose the style of the Royal Navy: and in war as in peace, its style has been one of its most potent assets.

The Navy has the allure of a very particular club, and especially enthralls, I think, those who can never qualify to join it. Jane Austen, whose two youngest brothers both became admirals, adored the Royal Navy, knew a great deal about it, and never wrote a naval fact wrong. All over the world outsiders of another kind, eyeing the presence of this force from Bremerhaven or Yokohama, St Petersburg or Newport News, have bemusedly admired, envied, and copied the Royal Navy's unique panache. Even today, when there are far bigger navies in the world, British naval traditions and methods are widely honoured (British techniques too—at the end of 1970 warships worth £250m were on order for foreign fleets in British yards).

THE STYLE is first a matter of sheer age. It is like a gilded container in which the experience of many centuries is stored and augmented. Perhaps the chief purpose of a professional navy is to act as a communicator of skills. Commanders of warships often look alarmingly young to middle-aged observers, and there are commanders of major ships of the Royal Navy too young to have served in the second World War. But so constant and pungent is the presence of the Navy, so strong is the thread that binds one generation to the next, that nothing has been lost by time. Like one of those people whose grandfather met the great-grandson of a lady whose great-great-uncle attended the execution of Charles I, so the Navy has acquired its sea-skills by direct instruction from the Elizabethan privateers, or even those skulldugger mariners of Rye. The Navy well knows the practical advantages of tradition, and the British sailor has always been a man of intensely conservative instincts. Cook had to flog some of his men, to make them eat his new-fangled fresh victuals—"every innovation whatever on board ship", he wrote, "though ever so much to the advantage of seamen, is sure to meet with their highest disapprobation." Only a year or two ago many of the Navy's ratings, only half in fun, wore black armbands to mourn the passing of the grog ration. Even the current scandal about victualling fiddles might almost be considered traditional: they call it "the drop" in the service, it has precedents as old as the Navy itself, and its cast of elderly lieutenants and South Coast wholesalers has been in more or less continuous performance since the Middle Ages.

Age makes for mystery, and there was until recently something arcane and unattainable to the Navy's manner. Like the Jockey Club, or the Athenaeum in the days of its patrician splendour, it presented to the ill-informed a façade of enigmatic grandeur. This was partly bluff. The Victorian Navy was not half so formidable as it looked, and its disgraceful unreadiness for war was largely due to the clannish self-sufficiency of its officer corps, aloof to the world's prosaics. But bluff or truth, it worked. No Power dared to challenge the Royal Navy throughout the Victorian century, and the fleet was always the most effective instrument of British diplomacy. How could foreigners hope to match a navy whose controlling board met in exquisite 18th-century Whitehall chambers, whose Navy List included eight Vice-Admirals of the British Coast, whose officers all appeared to be dukes, and whose responsibilities included the patronage of several church livings, notably that of Alston with Garrigill and Humshaugh? In both World Wars the age, queerness, and confidence of the Royal Navy fatally inhibited the German command—whose admirals doubtless felt in themselves, faced with all this ritual majesty, the disadvantages of upstarts. The Royal Navy was the Real Thing, and like the English gentleman, was supposed by foreigners to be altogether less fallible than it was: bitter indeed was the disillusionment of one German officer who, surrendering to the Royal Navy at Rosyth in 1918, met the grand adversary for the first time in the



Power, 1917

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person of a scruffy and plebeian lieutenant, smoking a fag-end and attended by a boatload of ragamuffin ratings.

The forms and features of the Navy were designed for maximum effect. The Sultan of Morocco, after visiting the Navy's latest battleship in the 1880s, was asked what had impressed him most about the ship—the 16-inch turret guns, the 8,000 horsepower engines, the two torpedo boats carried on board, or perhaps the electric light throughout? "The Captain's face", was his reply.

The imperturbable swagger of the service in those days compensated for its lack of any war plans whatsoever, just as the gleaming accoutrements of its warships made up for the fact that, to save tarnishing the brass, many ships went without gunnery practice. The Navy has always had a sense of theatre. Like Japanese warlords in their daemonic masks, or Ashanti tribesmen slung around with fetishes, it has deliberately flaunted its awfulness. Let the US Navy name its destroyers for Members of Congress, and its tugs for Indian tribes; let the Russians name their minesweepers for "weapons and equipment"; let the poetic Japanese name their destroyers for the wind, the rain, the clouds, the waves, and the twilight; the Royal Navy sticks to its thunder, and has named its four nuclear Polaris submarines *Renown, Repulse, Resolution,* and *Revenge.*

SOMETIMES THE NAVY'S DISPLAY has descended into braggadocio, but in general its style has been lovely to see. There is an aspect of art to this service. The very conception of British seapower has, as the scientists say of their solutions, elegance. Mahan caught it in his famous apostrophe of the Nelsonic navy—"those far distant, storm-beaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked." The Admiralty caught it, too, in its message to the Grand Fleet upon the German surrender in 1918—the most overwhelming naval victory in the history of warfare: "The surrender of the German Fleet, accomplished without shock of battle, will remain for all time the example of the wonderful silence and sureness with which sea power attains its ends." The Navy has always been sensitive to the beauty of its practices, and of its ships. It is touching how often sailors refer to the beauty or plainness of warships, in the age of the hydrogen bomb: any addict of British naval literature knows how fond its authors are of categorising "ugly ships, but good seaboats", or "proportions of quite unusual beauty."

In its time the Navy has sponsored some handsome things ashore, too. There is no grander room in Europe than the Painted Hall at Greenwich, the ultimate shrine of Britain's naval glory, where Nelson lay in state after Trafalgar, and where to this day beneath the tremendous Thornhill frescoes (Tyranny at the feet of King William, the spirit of Victory approaching HMS Blenheim), officers attending the Royal Naval College courses twice a day eat their mulligatawny and fish fingers. At Devonport stands Rennie's Royal William Victualling Yard, a supreme example of early 19th-century functionalism, bakery, stores, offices, brewery, ordnance stores all forming part of a graceful waterside whole, and built to a unified design all the way down to garden seats and lampposts.

The Admiralty building in Whitehall is sheltered by a beautifully simple Tuscan screen, commanded by a pair of grave seahorses (and erected by the young Robert Adam not for art's sake, but to protect Their Lordships against the bricks and curses of disgruntled tars). And most memorable of all is Portsmouth Dockyard, Pompey to the sailors, an enclave which seems from the outside to straggle indefinably along the harbour shore, but which contains within its perimeters a marvellous exhibition of architecture and structural engineering, and assumes, once one is past the elderly policemen at the gates, a fine old pattern of its own.

IT IS GENERALLY FULL of warships, piles of grey steel and spindly aerials—frigates in line along the quays, with the cars of their crews or fitters neatly parked alongisde—the bulk of a commando carrier misty across the basin—a missile destroyer sidling in. A labyrinth of sheds and offices fills every available space between the docks, and tucked away everywhere, manoeuvred among by mobile cranes or packed with clerkly Wrens, are buildings of delight: monumental iron-framed Ship Shops, stately red brick stores, a cupola'd house for the Admiral, a steepled dockyard church, dainty terrace houses, terrific pumping stations, gateways, smithies, ancient dry docks.

Towering above it all, spanking in black and white and rope rigging, is "the ship *Victory*", as the Navy calls her to differentiate her from HMS *Victory*, the Royal Naval Barracks up the road. Her spars are taller still than the radar masts, and her captain's quarters are the official quarters of the Commander-in-Chief, Naval Home Command. Pompey has been a royal dockyard since 1194. The first dry dock in the world was built there, and so were the battleships *Dreadnought* and *Queen Elizabeth.* For several centuries it was the principal naval base of the world's greatest military force, and its true aesthetic now, like that of the Royal Navy as a whole, is the aesthetic of age, pride, and love.

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5. On Love

LOVE MAY SEEM an incongruous word to use, of a professional fighting force whose business is war and whose history has been disturbingly bloody. But the Royal Navy has never been afraid of it, and the annals of the service, even in its harshest years, are full of the emotion. In 1666 they buried Admiral Myngs, a kind rough old sailor mortally wounded in action against the Dutch, and after the funeral a dozen seamen stepped forward, tears in their eyes to make what Pepys thought one of the most romantic declarations "that ever I heard of in my life."

> We are here a dozen of us [they said] that have long known and loved and served our dead commander, Sir Christopher Myngs, and we have now done the last office of laying him in the ground. We would be glad we had any other to offer after him, and in revenge of him. All we have is our lives; if you will please to get His Royal Highness to give us a fireship among us all, here is a dozen of us, out of all which choose you one to be commander, and the rest of us, whoever he is, will serve him; and, if possible, do that that shall show our memory of our dead commander, and our revenge.

And in 1882, when the captain of the battleship *Inflexible* had to leave the ship because of ill-health, he received this letter from the lower deck:

> *Sir,*
> *We, the ship's company of HMS* Inflexible, *take the earliest opportunity of expressing to you our deep sorrow and sympathy on this sad occasion of your sickness, and it is our whole wish that you may speedily recover and be amongst us again, who are so proud to be serving under you . . . we trust shortly to see you again amongst us and on the field of active service, where you are as much at home as on your own grand ship, and at the end may you receive your share of rewards and laurels, and your ship's company will then feel as proud and prouder than if it was bestowed on themselves.*
> *Sir, trusting that you will overlook the liberty we have taken in sending this to you, We beg to remain, Your faithful and sympathizing ship's company,*
> *Inflexibles.*

Nelson's treatment of his crews has been the Royal Navy's ideal ever since Trafalgar: one of his greatest gifts was the inspiration of brotherhood, which expressed itself not only in comradeship, but in grace of conduct and even of phrase. Churchill satirised this tenderness as sodomy, and of course sodomy has always occurred at sea, particularly in an officer corps educated as it used to be from earliest boyhood in celibacy. "Commander, sir, are you there?" asks the midshipman in a favourite story of the Edwardian navy, knocking on the lavatory door. "No, my boy", the Captain's deep voice replies, "I am quite alone." There is nothing Rabelaisian, though, to the tradition of concern which Nelson institutionalised. Sensual though it often is, it is more a sense of family than a sexual system.

THE NAVY IS A PRIVATE WORLD, integral to the nation's existence but separate from the affairs of the community at large: it has a powerful sense of self-protective fraternity. I asked both officers and men if they were not depressed by the public attitude to the contemporary Navy, the ignorance, the apathy, and the frequent denigration: to a man they replied that they took no notice of it—there was a lot of nonsense in the newspapers, wasn't there? The Navy is defiant in its convictions. At a wardroom luncheon I happened to remark that the Royal Navy's material generally seemed to have been inferior to its opponents': "the proof of the pudding", a dark North Country voice answered me, without further comment, from the other side of the table, "is in the eating." The present Second Sea Lord has succinctly expressed the Royal Navy's common opinion of itself: "We are and intend to remain by far the most professional, experienced, and expert Navy in the world."

The Navy sticks to its own—the smaller it is, perhaps, the tighter. It has its own particular habits, its own ports and pubs and tattooists, its family links, its private jokes, its slang, its conventions, its endless shop talk. On the bridge of a ship at Portsmouth I overheard two petty officers talking to a couple of dockyard officials, and every word of their conversation concerned ships they had known—discussed with just the same intimacy, tinged with cattiness, that others might use to dissect the affairs of relatives or office colleagues. Like a good regiment, or like the Canadian Mounted Police, this is a force with a spirit of membership: once in, seaman or admiral, you are paid up for life, and linked by unwritten testaments of sentiment and comradeship to all other naval men, dead or alive.

It is this phalanx spirit, this Nelsonic love one for another, that gives the Royal Navy its exhilarating assurance. Both officers and men have long been unmistakable, in or out of uniform—high-spirited but hierarchal, cocky or even aggressive. The British seaman, it was said in 1709, had "a natural haughtiness which eminently distinguishes him from the rest of man": and so powerful is the corporate character of the Royal Navy that even today its sailors, urbane young technicians though they are, are recognisably the same characters as their Victorian, or even Nelsonic, forbears.

I RECENTLY CHANCED TO SEE the crew of the submarine *Otter* painting ship in a Scottish loch soon after returning from sea. They looked exuberantly light-hearted—dressed in paint-

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splashed Number 8s, one man wearing a yellowish mop-head for a hat, whistling and smoking as they worked. I stopped to watch them as I passed along the quay, and felt as I stood there an astonishing sense of *déjà vu*. None of those sailors could have been more than 20 years old, yet every face, every gesture seemed familiar to me—in a hundred old photographs I had admired just that same insouciance, that air of prickly *corps d'esprit*—in the crews of second-class cruisers on the China Station long ago, in the faces that grin at one from the conning-towers of primitive submarines, or from the decks of elaborate Dreadnoughts beneath the Malta ramparts. I had seen them all before: and they looked back at me, too, with a timeless, amused, and condescending tolerance. They were citizens of another order—on the whole rather superior, they seemed to imply, to mine.

6. Portentous Weapons

"PORTENTOUS WEAPONS!" murmured Mr Gladstone, musing over the 80-ton guns of one of Her Majesty's battleships. "I really wonder the human mind can bear such a responsibility!" Man of peace though he was, and never the Navy's favourite statesman, still he was not immune to the magic of the service, and did not demur when welcomed by the guns of cruisers, or saluted by naval guards of honour. In those days even Little Englanders had no fundamental doubts about the Navy, and accepted its essential role in the life of the nation.

Today things are different. Nobody is quite sure now what navies are for, or how they fit into nuclear strategies, or how autonomous they should be, or what kind of war we should be preparing for. Should the Royal Navy be training for major wars more or less like the last one, or only for nuclear war, or for "little wars", or for all three kinds? Navies have been in a state of perpetual flux since the advent of steam power, but their purposes have never been so unclear as they are now. From one year to the next the Navy is never sure what the strategic theorists and the politicians are going to have in mind for it. Will the next Government abandon Polaris? What about vertical take-off aircraft, and multiple warheads, and East of Suez, and the future of Singapore? The cruisers *Tiger* and *Lion*, currently listed as "undergoing conversion", have been undergoing conversion of one kind or another for 30 years, as naval technique has shifted around them: even the names of the class took a generation to solidify—*Lion* was once called *Defence*, *Tiger* was once called *Bellerophon*, *Bellerophon* was once *Tiger* and so for a time was *Blake*. The Royal Navy's carriers, too, illustrate the general naval uncertainty, for they turn up down the years in many guises—as Fleet Carriers, as Commando Ships, as Helicopter Carriers, as Heavy Repair Ships, or as the debilitated prestige ships of lesser foreign navies. The small print of *Jane's* British entries forms an enthralling anthology of second thoughts, muddles, compromises and extrapolations.

In the event, today's Royal Navy is a triple instrument: sea route defence force, "little war" police force, nuclear deterrent. Including ships now building and refitting, and not counting a couple of hundred ancillary craft like oilers, survey craft, tugs, tenders and salvage ships, the fleet consists of some 190 warships. For the defence of the sea routes, as part of the NATO naval alliance, the Navy possesses, according to *Jane's* 1972–73, two aircraft carriers, six nuclear-propelled fleet submarines, 27 patrol submarines, two cruisers, nine guided-missile destroyers, 70-odd destroyers and frigates and 56 minesweepers. The Amphibious Force, primarily for "little wars", comprises three commando ships and two big assault ships. And the nuclear deterrent consists of the four Polaris nuclear submarines of the Tenth Submarine Squadron, working as part of the general Western deterrent, but able to represent, if necessary, a specifically British warning of instant and devastating retaliation.

THIS IS BY NO MEANS, as popular supposition has it, a vanished navy. It is the third navy of the world, and much the most powerful in western Europe. In numbers of men it is just about the same size as it was in 1897, the year of Queen Victoria's jubilee and perhaps the apogee of imperial confidence, and rather larger than it was in 1935. In technique it is probably more efficient than it has ever been before. It has some weaknesses of material. Its torpedoes are antiquated, and a replacement has been bogged down in technical difficulties; its missile destroyers are said to be inferior to the Russian equivalent; it is short of offensive capacity; its ships, though on average newer than the Americans', are older than the Russians'. But since every man in the fleet is a volunteer, we may assume that the quality of the Royal Navy's personnel, or at least its spirit, is the best there is.

Whether the Navy is properly composed, nobody can say. Some critics think it should have far more small, cheap, fast missile boats—a small-ship navy, instead of the medium-ship navy we presently have. Some, like the editor of *Jane's*, deplore the run-down of its carriers. It is arguable that the Royal Navy should not aspire to an independent status at all, but should be dovetailed completely into the navies of the NATO alliance, or absorbed like the Canadian Navy into

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a single national defence force. It is certainly debatable whether Great Britain should afford the immense effort and expense of the Tenth Submarine Squadron—which, though its missiles are subject to NATO control, is now the principal strike force of the Royal Navy.

FOR MYSELF I accept that a maritime Power of the importance and vulnerability of Britain needs an independent nuclear deterrent: no major State can sensibly depend absolutely upon the loyalty of allies, and it seems to me that the size of a deterrent is immaterial, its effectiveness depending merely upon its infallible frightfulness. The Royal Navy's Polaris submarine force, now in perpetual operational cycle, has cost the country some £350m: it is, so the Navy says, "the largest single industrial undertaking that the country has ever attempted within a given timescale." Though the Polaris missiles themselves are built in America, their warheads are British and so are the four submarines. Two boats are normally at sea throughout the year, and their combined firepower, it is said, is greater than the total of all explosives ever detonated in the history of war. All this power is, at this very moment, prowling about the ocean bed on our behalf, virtually undetectable so far, and able to throw its nuclear missiles 32 at a time to any target within 2,500 miles. Since there is no place further than 1,800 miles from the sea, the Royal Navy is now able to direct an attack anywhere on earth.

The four boats work to a constant cycle, on a permanent war footing. Each has two crews, one at sea, one ashore; each spends three months on patrol; each returns for servicing at Faslane on the Clyde, and goes for regular refit to Rosyth. When at sea the submarine preserves radio silence though it receives a constant flow of messages from Britain, including weekly personal messages for its crew. Most of its men never know where they are. The captain himself does not know upon what targets his missiles are aimed, for they are targeted by computer from a shore headquarters. The Polaris submarines never put into any foreign port. *Resolution* once appeared at Portsmouth, just to let the rest of the Navy see her; otherwise they have never been seen anywhere since their launching, except only at Rosyth and at their home base of Faslane.

This is the new Scapa. It is a brand-new base, built specifically to service nuclear submarines. It is an unlovely but lavish group of structures set delectably upon the shores of Gareloch, over the hump from Loch Lomond and some 40 miles from the open sea. The Royal Navy has known this little loch for at least 400 years: Faslane was a repair base in the last war, and there is still a ship-breakers yard adjacent, where dejected destroyers and morose old carriers may be seen in degressive stages of collapse. Everything about HMS Neptune, though, is exceedingly modern. Its sole function is to keep those submarines at sea, and it seems to be geared about equally to technical efficiency and crew morale.

There is a huge sports pavilion, awful with swimming pools and badminton courts. There are complete training mock-ups of nuclear reactors and submarine controls. There is an officers' wardroom like a safari hotel in some half-developed tourist paradise. There is a floating dock for nuclear submarines. Wild and eminent pop groups perform in the ratings' club. Computer telex links Faslane directly with the makers of Polaris in the U.S.A. Ratings ashore live in an expensive chintzy complex of single or double rooms. Submarines home from sea moor, within several webs of security control, at a quay directly below the control room windows, like aircraft on the tarmac. In the centre of the base is an interdenominational house of worship, as suitable for Quaker meditation as for Stanford in B flat. Over the hill to the west the missiles are stored deep in a hillside beside Loch Long, in vaults of infinite secrecy.

It is a strange but not a sinister place. The Navy knows that if ever one of those submarines actually fired its missiles in anger, then the purpose of the entire operation would be lost anyway. Everybody realises the ghastly absurdity of this impasse, and there is certainly no belligerent posturing at Faslane. But strange, yes: in that haunting setting, with the hills running away behind to Ben Lomond, and the wide expanse of the Clyde sweeping away to the sea below, there is a weird suggestiveness, almost obscene, to the slug-shapes of the great black submarines at their quay, with the black rectangles of their rudders protruding above the water far astern, and the White Ensign flying very white and wholesomely at the bridge.

STRANGEST OF ALL is the fact that this fearful force belongs to the Royal Navy at all. The Faslane techniques are clearly based upon American experience: but the nuclear submarine crews at Faslane remain reassuringly, almost incongruously RN. While I was at the base there was a presentation in the officers' wardroom to a well-known veteran of Submarine Command, Chief Petty Officer "Diesel" Jones, and nothing could have been less like Dr Strangelove. The base commodore made the requisite jolly speech ("You won't quote me now, will you?"). The captain of the *Repulse* would perfectly have satisfied Miss Austen, so impeccable was his tailoring and gentlemanly his bearing; and when

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they handed over the mounted silver representation of some part of a submarine, I did not quite grasp what, through the slight haze of beer and bonhomie, I swear, after 37 years of service with the fleet "Diesel" Jones actually *blushed.*

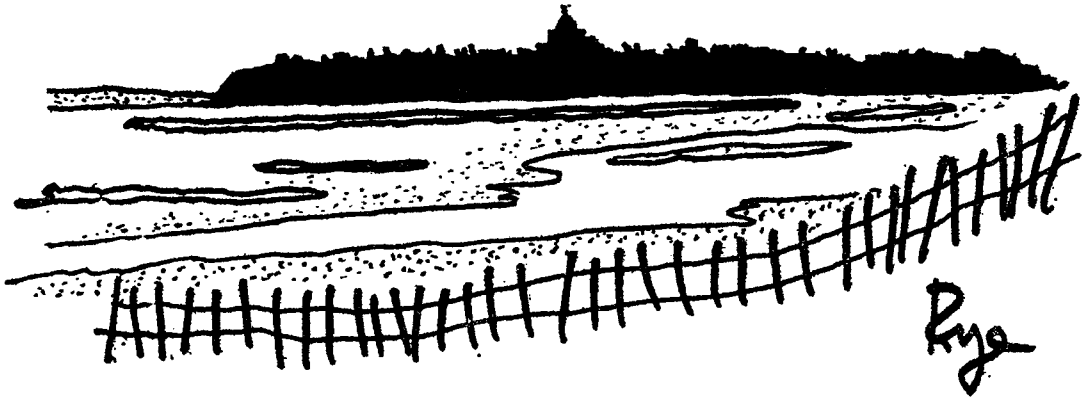
7. *A Part of Us*

IN THE NORTH-EAST CORNER of Scapa Flow, only a mile from the shore and within sight of the tower of Kirkwall Cathedral, a solitary buoy marks the position of the *Royal Oak*, torpedoed by a German submarine on 13 October 1939. From the air one can still see the black shape of the battleship below, and the oil that still issues slowly from it. More than 800 sailors are entombed within that hull, and whenever a ship of the Royal Navy passes the place, the buoy is piped, like an admiral, in honour and in mourning.

The Royal Navy is very old, very beautiful I think, with a corporate memory reaching far back into the British past, enriched by many sorrows and triumphs, ennobled by great men, and for many centuries providing an essential background, almost a décor, for the affairs of our State. This continuity, this distillation of the national experience, is to my mind the most moving thing about this ever moving institution. The Navy is a part of us all, and only bigotry or ignorance would deny the relationship.

On a bright winter morning last year I was loitering, as I love to do, about the naval memorial upon the Hoe at Plymouth, stirred and saddened as always by the long roster of the dead, by the titles of the great fleets whose power we once dispersed about the seas, and the ocean battlegrounds in whose wastes they fought—the Home Fleet, the Eastern Fleet, the Mediterranean Fleet, the East Indies Fleet, the Pacific Fleet—the North Russia Convoys, the Coral Sea, the Western Approaches, Crete, Burma, Norway, Java. As I wandered there a group of chattering schoolchildren approached the monument, shepherded by pedagogues, and assembled in the little courtyard before the monument.

At once a silence fell upon them. They stood there not so much aghast, I thought, as incredulous. The grandeur, the pathos, the scale, the sacrifice of it all seemed beyond their conception, as though they were the memorials of another civilisation that stood before them, commemorating the sailors of some foreign, half-forgotten country. Whose are these names? they seemed to be asking, as they stared silently at the slabs: and in my heightened mood of pity and exaltation I thought I heard a voice answer them out of the sea. *"They are your own, my children. . . ."*



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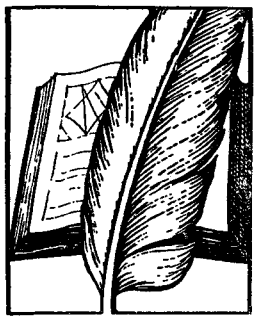

Column

AT THE MOMENT when I write this, it is still not yet known whether President Nixon and Dr Kissinger have at length negotiated acceptable peace terms with North Viet Nam; or, if they have, what those terms may be. But once again hopes have risen that peace may be at hand and it is possible that in his second Inaugural the President may be able to announce the settlement which he promised to achieve in his first.

If he does, it will be a notable achievement for President Nixon and Dr Kissinger and will gladden the hearts of millions of people both in the United States and in the rest of the world; whether it will bring equal joy to Viet Nam is rather more doubtful. For if the government in Hanoi is now in fact prepared to make peace, it is not out of any genuine agreement with the terms which the United States regards as the only ones which are acceptable. It is because the only alternative offered to them is a resumption, and an intensification, of the American air attacks both north and south of the 17th Parallel which preceded the latest stage of the peace negotiations in Paris. One has the feeling that any peace achieved by this means is not likely to be a lasting one so far as Viet Nam is concerned. But perhaps that concerns no one except the Vietnamese themselves.

One might say, indeed, that the means by which the United States has sought a final settlement with North Viet Nam have been as distasteful as those by which it conducted the war. One might find an analogy with the recent American air attacks in the great bomber offensive which the Royal Air Force directed against Germany in the later stages of World War II. That offensive was intended to destroy German civilian morale, and was, by many, regarded as in itself sufficient to end the war. But from the military point of view there was always a large gap between the physical means applied and the end to be achieved, a suppressed premise, based on a somewhat primitive psychology, which was never exposed to adequate analysis of criticism; and this logical weakness was a fundamental factor in the failure of the offensive.

In Viet Nam, as in Germany, physical means have been applied to achieve a moral effect. As in Germany, it was assumed that by dropping a given weight of bombs it was possible to produce a predictable diminution in the enemy's will to resist. In this case, however, the target was not the morale of the civilian population but the mind of the government in Hanoi. Here the premise was that if you dropped enough bombs on General Giap he would come to the conference table in a mood to seek peace.

Nothing one knows about General Giap and his colleagues inclines one to think that this proposition is likely to be true. Dr Kissinger, of course, may well know better; and now, in the end, his bet may prove better than mine. But the point is that, at best, the President and Dr Kissinger have been engaged in a gigantic gamble; and operations of war should not be allowed to fall into the hands of gamblers, battles should not be treated as if they were a horse-race. There is an astonishing contrast between the finesse and sophistication with which the President and Dr Kissinger conduct their diplomatic manoeuvres and the almost schoolboy crudity which characterises their military thinking.

FOR IT MUST NOT BE supposed that the American conduct of the war in Viet Nam is yet another proof that war is something far too serious to be left to generals. The lesson, if any, is that it is too serious to be left to civilians. Responsibility for the conduct of the war has rested squarely, and directly, on the shoulders of the President of the United States who, after all, remains a civilian, even when you call him a Commander-in-Chief. Admiral Moorer, the Chairman of the American Joint Chiefs of Staff, has recently stated that he was never given any reason by the civilian authorities for the resumption of the bombing in Viet Nam, which remained a secret locked in civilian breasts. It is true that the Admiral hastily followed this with a statement that there had been continuous consultation between him and the White House on all aspects of military operations in Viet Nam; in the face of so blank a contradiction, one has the feeling that his first statement was rather more reliable than the second.

For America's allies there is perhaps another lesson to be learned. If they were ever again called on to engage in hostilities on the side of the United States, they would be required to cooperate with greatly superior American forces under American supreme command. If the Viet Nam war is any precedent, this would mean effective command by the President of the United States, that is to say, today, of President Nixon, or tomorrow of Mr Edward Kennedy or Mr Spiro Agnew or anyone else whom the vagaries of the American political system convert into a Commander-in-Chief. This is surely a prospect from which any responsible soldier, sailor, or airman must recoil in horror.

Field Marshal Montgomery once said to me of Admiral Mountbatten, then Chief of Combined

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Operations, that though a very gallant sailor, who had had three ships sunk under him, he didn't know how to wage war. I have something of the same feeling about Mr Nixon and Dr Kissinger. They may be the most accomplished diplomats, but waging war is not their thing and they should give it up. I very much hope that soon they may be allowed to do so.

THE WAR IN VIET NAM, however, has throughout been one of the oddest and most inconclusive wars there has ever been, particularly if one takes into account the immense resources, both material and emotional, which the United States has invested in it. Any future historian of the war will be faced with an immensely difficult and complicated task if he is to try and make sense of it.

One mystery which he will be required to solve is, not only the motive for the resumption of American bombing of Viet Nam, but the actual scale of the attacks and the effects which they achieved. Robert Conquest, in a recent article in *The Times*, has reminded us that the attacks have been described as being of a "Hiroshima type," in which the weight of explosive dropped is said to have had an even greater destructive effect than the atom bombs dropped on Japan. It has also been variously reported that the Americans have dropped on Viet Nam, a country not much larger than Wales, a weight of bombs more than *eighty times* that which fell on Britain in World War II, more than *eight times* greater than the total weight of explosive dropped by the Western allies during that war, and equal, in destructive effect, to three hundred of the atomic bombs dropped on Japan.

I do not challenge these calculations, though I wonder on what they are based and whether they can be mathematically reconciled with each other. Nor do I wish to challenge the moral indignation of those by whom such figures are most frequently quoted. But, as for myself, they leave me genuinely puzzled.

Anyone who witnessed the appalling devastation caused by single raids in World War II in, say, Hamburg, Berlin, or Dresden, not to speak of the holocaust of Hiroshima, must surely wonder at the sparsity of evidence for the presumably far greater destruction (eight times? eighty times? three hundred times?) caused by the American attacks in Viet Nam. The Allied bombing attacks of World War II were, after all, scattered over a continent and were not really effective for a period of more than two years. By now the cities and towns, even the villages, of North Viet Nam should surely be a heap of uninhabitable ruins, as Dresden was after a single night attack, or Hiroshima after one atomic bomb. In fact, so far as the prosecution of the war is concerned, they seem to be functioning with considerable efficiency, and the only visual evidence I myself have seen of the effects of the Americans' "indiscriminate terror raids" has been a television news film of the ruins of a single street in Hanoi.

The contradiction is all the more puzzling because, of course, North Viet Nam has a very different attitude to, and interest in, the publication of evidence demonstrating the destructiveness of the air attacks which she has endured. It was in the interest of Germany to conceal such evidence, both from her enemies and from her own people. It is to the interest of North Viet Nam to use it as proof of American barbarism and as a propaganda weapon which has had a devastating effect on the political morale both of the American people and of their friends and well-wishers; and North Viet Nam has no lack of sympathisers in the West eager to assist in using such propaganda to the fullest possible effect.

Yet so far singularly little concrete evidence has been forthcoming. Mr Conquest reminds us that, according to the government in Hanoi, total casualties in North Viet Nam from American air attacks since the resumption of the bombing have been 1300–1400, a figure which, though appalling by any humane standards, is in fact minuscule given the reported weight and scale of the American attacks. Mr Conquest reasonably asks: why should Hanoi underestimate its casualties? But if its figures are accurate, by what standards can such attacks be called "indiscriminate"? They would seem to indicate rather that American bombing has achieved an almost uncanny degree of either precision or ineffectiveness. Where have all the bombs gone to?

I DO NOT ASK such questions from any desire to palliate or justify the American air attacks, which in fact I believe to be utterly wrong; and I am afraid that the kind of scepticism they imply will be taken as evidence of my innate lack of compassion by those whom Mr Conquest calls the "propagandists of atrocity." I ask only because I genuinely seek information and enlightenment. An ingenious friend has volunteered the suggestion that in fact the raids have not taken place at all, or only in a token form (with spurious statistics about bombs delivered on target), as part of some infinitely complicated Oriental game, such as Chinese war lords used to play against each other, making unintelligible moves for inscrutable reasons on a board which only simulates a battlefield. Can they be "shadow" attacks in a "shadow" war just as Mr Healey is a "shadow" Chancellor in a "shadow" Cabinet? I should be very glad if this were true, and the Viet Nam war could be reduced to only a game, even if it left me

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more puzzled and confused than before. But I fear it is too ingenious and too devious even for Dr Kissinger.

★

I HAVE BEEN DELIGHTED by an account, in the *Sunday Times* Weekly Review, of a visit recently paid to Oxford by their distinguished contributor, Miss Jilly Cooper. Her purpose was to savour the kind of life which is lived by an Oxford don today, and I am glad to say that she came away convinced that no human lot could be happier. And this is not surprising, because the Oxford she describes is a kind of Cloud-Cuckoo-Lotus-Land that never existed outside Miss Cooper's imagination. When she left she felt a sense of regret that she herself had never shared the delights of the university, though she learned typing in Oxford at the age of seventeen, and apparently wrought havoc among undergraduates.

Oxford dons are "spectacularly handsome" (Mr Anthony Quinton, New College) and have extremely attractive wives (Mrs Anthony Quinton), "slim as a blade, with Titian hair and large heavy-lidded brown eyes," who wear rust-coloured suède suits from Fortnum's, or if they are not wearing suède suits from Fortnum's, they are blonde, "with a willowy figure and a brilliant complexion from hunting," and "wear skin-tight green velvet pants with a white shirt slashed to the waist" (Mrs Alex de Jonge). "Bombshell," Miss Cooper calls Mrs de Jonge, but the word seems hardly adequate to such a vision.

Oxford dons are rich. They have to be. You can't keep wives like that on nothing. Unmarried, they earn the equivalent of £15,000 a year, though I've no doubt both the University Grants Committee and the Inland Revenue would be surprised to learn this. God knows what they earn when they're married. They continually eat simply delicious food, even at Wadham: "about an acre of smoked salmon, beef cooked in wine with fluffy brown bullet-shaped parsnips, *oeufs en cocotte* and rows of full wineglasses queueing up to be drunk." Their conversation, not unnaturally, "sparkles", though after dinner (Wadham again!) "one's wine glass was topped up so often, and the vintage port orbited the table at such a rate, that it would be miraculous for anyone to remember the witticisms next morning. . . ."

With all that wit and all that money, it is not surprising that Oxford dons have very good taste, and Miss Cooper gives us many hints about what a don's room should look like: "a pink Japanese flower motif painted up one wall, a collection of silver spoons and paper-weights, a white sofa, chairs and carpets," or, if you prefer it, "Brilliant turquoise curtains are the only peacock note in an austere room lined with red and green leather law books, where the furniture gleams with polish, and the papers and the magazines lie absolutely straight on the table. . . ."

Oxford dons are very hard-working. They teach for sixteen hours a week, with an occasional lecture thrown in, and attend innumerable committees in which they listen to each other talking interminably. They do this for twenty-six weeks of the year, and this is the absolute maximum that is tolerable, because the other twenty-six weeks are required "to recharge [the] batteries." It is not clear what they are recharged for, because Oxford dons do not think much of research. "I'm really too busy to do any research. After all . . . what is research but copying down what other people have written with varying degrees of accuracy?" (Mr Peter Carter, Wadham). So it is quite absurd for reformers to claim that university facilities and staff might possibly be employed more efficiently, and for Sir Oliver Franks ("an absolute pet . . . handsome, tall, ramrod-straight as a general") to write long boring reports suggesting that Oxford does not absolutely fulfil its academic responsibilities.

Oxford dons also enjoy beautiful weather. In my day the Oxford climate was a miasma of damp, cold and fog. Today, it is golden, autumnal, benign, "the buildings soft apricot in the starlight" (you *can't* be soft apricot in starlight). So it's not surprising that Miss Cooper would like to go up to Oxford. Only, of course, if she did, it would be to one of those men's colleges which now admit women, and not to one of those dowdy women's colleges like Somerville, where at high table they sit "drinking water and eating cold mutton or macaroni cheese" and interspersed among the prettier dons are "the older ones, slightly grizzled, with eager unpainted faces, wispy hair, rather masculine suits, and bright loud voices as though they were addressing a parish meeting. . . ." No wit, no glamour, no whizzing port *there!* Why waste skin-tight pants and shirts slashed to the waist on them? And what's the use of having turned an undergraduate's head at seventeen if you can't aim a little higher a few (but not too many) years later?

All the same, I think Miss Cooper would be disappointed if she did go to Oxford. She has written one of the most splendid fantasies about the university since *Zuleika Dobson*. But I have a feeling that after a term or so she might be longing for the truly "top people"—the company of the rich, handsome, witty, elegant, wine-bibbing journalists of the *Sunday Times*. The truth is, I suspect, that for a moment Miss Cooper fell under the spell of Oxford's ancient witchcraft, but I hope she got away soon enough for it not to turn her head completely.

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Dostoevsky's Realism

By Joseph Frank

READERS of ENCOUNTER had the rare good fortune, some two years ago, to be able to read the *Diary* of Natalie Herzen, and more recently a long unpublished letter of Michael Bakunin, and thus to have caught a vivid glimpse in action of that extraordinary character, Sergei Nechayev. Everyone knows that Nechayev, or more exactly, the Nechayev affair—the murder of a student named Ivanov in Moscow in 1868, a murder instigated by Nechayev and committed by him in complicity with others—furnished Dostoevsky with the main threads of action in his novel, *The Devils*. Some information on this point was indeed provided in a box accompanying the publication of the *Diary*; but it would be hard for the uninitiated to gather from this just what the relation of the novel was to its putative source. Edward Wasiolek, the learned editor of the English translation of Dostoevsky's notebooks, was quoted to the effect that Dostoevsky did not strive for anything like literal accuracy. He strove, we are told, to create a "type"; but this, while true, raises more questions than it answers. How true was Dostoevsky's "type" to the real Nechayev and his underground organising efforts? Is Dostoevsky's novel, for all its brilliance, really only a malicious slander of the Russian revolutionary movement—an opinion almost unanimously held on both sides of the Iron Curtain—or is it possible to give some reasoned defence of its historical veracity? This is a question that must have occurred to any reader both of Natalie Herzen's *Diary* [ENCOUNTER, May 1970] and of Dostoevsky's novel (1871).

Now *The Devils*, to be sure, is a work of art and not either literal history or reportage (as, for example, *The House of the Dead*); nor did Dostoevsky ever pretend that it had any claim to truth other than as a creation of his imagination.

> Several of our critics have observed [he says in *The Diary of a Writer*] that in my novel I used the plot of the well-known Nechayev affair. But they hastened to add that my book did not contain any actual portraits or a literal reproduction of the Nechayev history—having taken an event, I tried only to clarify its possibility in our society, and precisely as a social event, not as an anecdote, not as a description of a particular occurrence in Moscow. All this, I may observe, is quite correct. In my novel I have not handled the well-known Nechayev and his victim Ivanov in any personal way.

It is true that in a letter to the Crown Prince Alexander Alexandrovich, accompanying a presentation copy of the book (February 1873), Dostoevsky referred to it as "almost a historical study"; but the qualification is indicative of his caution. His notion of "history," moreover, had always involved the idea of its imaginative extrapolation—as when he wrote that the narrator of *Notes from Underground* "not only may, but positively must, exist in our society, given the circumstances under which our society was in general formed."

In the light of these admissions, one can see how relatively easy it has been to convict Dostoevsky of historical falsification, distortion and even defamation of the revolutionary movement in *The Devils*. Moreover, since the book was admittedly inspired by his detestation of the doctrines of Russian Nihilism—whose final noxious consequences he saw embodied in the actions of Nechayev and his group—it is scarcely surprising that sympathisers with the radicals at the time (not to mention their latter-day descendants) should have attacked the book on these grounds. If one replies to these attacks by the argument that Dostoevsky never intended his work to be a literal account of the Nechayev affair, it can be legitimately retorted that he opens himself to such criticism by having drawn so extensively on the well-known history for his narrative. Such a retort is unquestionably telling; but, at the same time, it raises the larger issue of the relation of the

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historical novel as a whole (including novels based on the contemporary history of their own time)[1] to the "reality" it employs as its source.

IT IS PERFECTLY OBVIOUS that no such novel, in view of the inevitable stylisation involved in the creation of any work of art, is immune to the type of criticism levelled against Dostoevsky. No historical novel, when stringently compared to its sources, can escape the indictment of distortion or falsification in some way. Indeed, it was this very conviction of the inevitable betrayal of history by art which persuaded so great an historical novelist as Manzoni to abandon the form. But so radical a resolution of the problem has not been generally accepted, and critics have contented themselves, in relation to such writers as Scott and Balzac, with demanding only a general conformation to the contours of historical reality rather than an unattainable accuracy in every detail of interpretation and every trait of character. So long as the novelist revealed essential aspects of the period or the event he was dealing with, and did not violate the limits of historical verisimilitude and psychological probability, the question of accuracy in the strict sense became comparatively irrelevant. Nobody criticises Scott because *Ivanhoe* does not conform in every respect to our present knowledge of the Middle Ages, or *The Talisman* to the latest results of researches about the Crusades. No one bothers to attack Balzac because the characters of *Les Illusions Perdues*, based on well-known 19th-century French literary and cultural celebrities, are reflected through the distorting prism of Balzac's magnifying imagination. Nobody thinks it a major criticism of *War and Peace* that so impressive and powerful a personality as Napoleon is turned into a pathetic and self-indulgent little puppet.

All this is merely to argue that what has become true for Scott, Balzac, and Tolstoy should also begin to be the case for Dostoevsky. It is time to stop dwelling on the inevitable discrepancies between the historical record and the novel, and to pose the question of "accuracy" in the broad sense which has become customary for other works of the same genre. Is there anything in *The Devils* which unconscionably violates historical verisimilitude and psychological and moral probability when compared to the materials that Dostoevsky employed? This is the question to which the remainder of this article will address itself, using a limited number of instances drawn from the social-political intrigue of the book.

AT FIRST SIGHT, no example one could choose would seem to be more detrimental to Dostoevsky than that of Peter Verkhovensky. Peter plays the role in the novel taken by Nechayev in actuality; and we know that Dostoevsky treated this character with the utmost freedom. In a letter to Katkov (20 October 1870), Dostoevsky remarks that he had no special knowledge of the case other than public accounts, and would not have used such special knowledge even if he had had it.

> Even if I did know, I would not start in to copy. I take only the accomplished fact. My fantasy may diverge in the greatest degree from what actually occurred and my Peter Verkhovensky may not at all resemble Nechayev, but I believe that the impression in my mind will form the image of the kind of character, the type, which corresponds to this crime.

Indeed, Dostoevsky's notes reveal that the conception of Peter Verkhovensky changed, in the course of composition, from that of a passionate, romantic figure *à la* Lermontov to one who resembles, at least externally, the fast-talking, ingratiating impostor of Gogol's *Revizor*. Here, if anywhere, one would suppose that Dostoevsky's bitter enmity to the radicals would carry him past the bounds of the permissible manipulation of his materials.

To judge this question, we are fortunate in possessing a real-life portrait of Nechayev in action painted by no less a pen than that of Bakunin himself—a witness who may be assumed to have known him intimately, and whose judgment would not be affected by any *a priori* prejudices. The letter was written by Bakunin to a friend in Switzerland (24 July 1870), to warn him against Bakunin's erstwhile protégé. The letter appears to be so little-known, and is so vivid and fascinating, that it is worth quoting *in extenso*.

"My dear friend," Bakunin writes,[2]

> I have just learned that Nechayev has called on you and that you hastened to give him the address of our friends (M and his wife). I conclude that the two letters by which O and I warned you, and begged you to turn him away, arrived too late; and, without any exaggeration, I consider the result of this delay a veritable misfortune. It may seem strange to you that we advise you to turn away a man to whom we have given letters of recommendation addressed to you and written in the warmest

[1] Henry James has very well seen this intrinsic relation between the historical novel of the past and the novel of manners of the author's present. "All painters of manners and fashions, if we will, are historians, even when they least don the uniform: Fielding, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Hawthorne among ourselves . . ." *Notes on Novelists* (1914), p. 113.

[2] *Correspondence de Michel Bakounine*, 1860–1874 (ed. M. Dragomanov, tr. Marie Stromberg (Paris, 1896), pp. 324–330. Most of these letters are translated from the Russian, but this one was written directly in French by Bakunin.

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terms. But those letters date from the month of May; and since then we have been obliged to admit the existence of matters so grave that they have forced us to break all our relations with N. And, at the risk of appearing inconsistent and light-headed in your eyes, we have thought it our sacred duty to warn you and to put you on your guard against him. Now I shall try to explain briefly the reasons for the change.

It remains perfectly true that N is the man most persecuted by the Russian government, which has covered the continent of Europe with a cloud of spies seeking him in all countries; it has asked for his extradition from both Germany and Switzerland. It is equally true that N is one of the most active and energetic men I have ever met. When it is a question of serving what he calls the cause, he does not hesitate; nothing stops him, and he is as merciless with himself as with all the others. This is the principal quality which attracted me, and which impelled me to seek an alliance with him for a good while. Some people assert that he is simply a crook —but this is a lie! He is a devoted fanatic, but, at the same time, a very dangerous fanatic, whose alliance cannot but be harmful for everybody. And here is why: at first he was part of a secret committee which really existed in Russia. The committee no longer exists; all its members have been arrested. N remains alone, and alone he constitutes what he calls the Committee. His organisation in Russia having been decimated, he is trying to create a new one abroad. All this would be perfectly natural, legitimate, very useful—but the methods he uses are detestable. Very much struck by the catastrophe that has destroyed the secret organisation in Russia, he has gradually succeeded in convincing himself that, to found a serious and indestructible organisation, one must take as a foundation the tactics of Machiavelli and totally adopt the system of the Jesuits—violence as the body, falsehood as the soul.

Truth, mutual confidence, serious and strict solidarity exist only among a dozen individuals who form a *sanctus sanctorum* of the Society. All the rest must serve as a blind instrument, and as exploitable material in the hands of the dozen who are really united. It is allowed—and even ordered—to deceive all the others, to compromise them, to rob them and even, if need be, to get rid of them—they are conspiratorial fodder. For example: you have received N, thanks to our letter of recommendation, you have partly given him your confidence, you have recommended him to your friends. . . . Here he is, transplanted in your world—and what will he do? First he will tell you a pack of lies to increase your sympathy and your confidence; but he will not stop there. The tepid sympathies of men who are devoted to the revolutionary cause only in part, and who, besides this cause, have other human interests such as love, friendship, family, social relations—these sympathies are not, in his eyes, a sufficient foundation, and in the name of the cause he will try to get a hold on you completely without your knowledge. To do this, he will spy on you and try to get possession of all your secrets; and in your absence, being alone in your room, he will open all your drawers and read all your correspondence. If a letter seems interesting to him, that is, compromising from any point of view either for yourself or one of your friends, he will steal it and preserve it carefully as a document either against you or your friends. He has done this with O, with Tata and with other friends—and when, at a general meeting, we accused him of this, he had the nerve to say— "Well, yes, that's our system. We consider as our enemies all those who are not with us *completely* and we have the duty to deceive and to compromise them." This means all those who are not convinced of their system, and have not agreed to apply it to themselves.

If you have presented him to a friend, his first concern will be to sow discord between the both of you by gossip and intrigue—in a word, to cause a quarrel. Your friend has a wife, a daughter; he will try to seduce them, to make them pregnant, in order to tear them away from official morality and to throw them into a forced revolutionary protest against society.

All personal ties, all friendship, all [gap in text] are considered by them as an evil, which they have the right to destroy because all this constitutes a force which, being outside the secret organisation, diminishes the sole force of this latter. Don't tell me that I exaggerate: all this has been amply unravelled and proven. Seeing himself exposed, poor N is still so naive, so childish, despite his systematic perversity, that he thought it possible to convert me—he went so far as to implore me to develop this theory in a Russian journal that he proposed to establish. He has betrayed the confidence of us all, he has stolen our letters, compromised us terribly, in a word, behaved like a villain. His only excuse is his fanaticism! He is terribly ambitious without knowing it, because he has ended by identifying the cause of the revolution with himself—but he is not an egoist in the usual sense of the word because he risks his life terribly, and leads the existence of a martyr full of privations and incredible activity. . . . His last project was nothing less than to set up a band of thieves and brigands in Switzerland, naturally with the aim of acquiring some revolutionary capital. I saved him by persuading him to leave Switzerland because he would certainly have been discovered, he and his gang, in a few weeks; he would have been lost, and all of us lost with him. . . .

Persuade M that the safety of his family demands that he break with them completely. He must keep N away from his family. Their system, their joy, is to seduce and corrupt young girls; in this way they control the whole family. I'm very sorry that they learned the address of M because *they would be capable of denouncing him* [italics in text]. Didn't they dare admit to me openly, in the presence of a witness, that the denunciation of a member—devoted or only partly devoted—is one of the means whose usage they consider quite legitimate and sometimes useful? To get possession of the secrets of a person or his family, so as to hold them in the palm of their hand, is their principal means. I'm so frightened at their knowing M's address that I beg him to change his lodgings secretly, so that they won't discover him.

AFTER PERUSING SUCH A DOCUMENT, it is difficult to have much patience with those numerous critics who have so insouciantly accused Dostoevsky of wilful slander and distortion. It is true that Dostoevsky does not show Peter Verkhovensky leading "the existence of a martyr full of privations"; but, as we shall see in a moment, this is because Dostoevsky allowed Peter to realise certain conspiratorial possibilities of which Nechayev dreamed but could not himself put into practice. Nor does Dostoevsky fail

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to indicate in Peter—though of course not very prominently—what Bakunin, in another letter (2 November 1872), called Nechayev's "genuine ache for the people's age-long suffering."

> "Listen'. [Peter says to Stavrogin] 'I've seen a child six years old leading home his drunken mother, while she swore at him with foul words. Do you suppose I am glad of that? When it's in our hands, maybe we'll mend things. . . ."

But Nechayev's "ache" for the people's sufferings did not excuse his misdeeds even in the eyes of most of his revolutionary comrades; and there is not a single action of Peter Verkhovensky that Nechayev did not perform, or would not have performed if given the chance.

JUST AS DOSTOEVSKY, in my opinion, does not transgress the bounds of historical verisimilitude in his portrait of Peter Verkhovensky, neither does he do so in the entire political intrigue of the book. To be sure, he does not limit himself to the actual proportions and dimensions of the events leading up to the murder of Ivanov (this would have given him only a tale of petty and futile agitation among a handful of students), any more than he tried to give a photographic picture of the purely private personality and character of Nechayev. True to his method of "fantastic realism," however, Dostoevsky based his political plot on a dramatic actualisation of the tactics and aims of the Nechayev movement.

What Dostoevsky meant by this much-misunderstood term of "fantastic realism" was that, in every case, his imagination began to operate on what he sensed to be the moral and psychic dilemmas of Russian life caused by the predominance among the educated class of "radical", *i.e.* progressive, Western European ideas and convictions in their Russian guise. His work was "realistic" because it started from this controlling historical-social ideological framework and used it as a guide in the operation of his artistic intuition. But it was also "fantastic" in the sense of allowing itself complete freedom to dramatise the ultimate and most extreme human consequences of such ideas in action, and to potentiate them in forms which rarely if ever appeared elsewhere with such sharply delineated typicality. (As Dostoevsky wrote of the underground man, "such a character not only may, *but positively must*, exist in our society.") What distinguishes *The Devils* from his other works, however, is that, as it were, so much of Dostoevsky's usual imaginative labours was already performed for him in advance.

For the imagination displayed in the Bakunin-Nechayev propaganda (the part of the two men in the composition of these documents is still a matter of dispute) matched and even surpassed Dostoevsky's own in its implacable logic; it coldly drew all the bloodcurdling conclusions which, as Dostoevsky had predicted earlier in the 1860s, would be the inevitable outcome of a morality of Utilitarian egoism allied to the purpose of provoking a violent revolution. And thus, in *The Devils*, Dostoevsky had merely to give artistic life to what he found already expressed as the aims and ambitions of the Nechayev movement—not its "history" in the strict sense, but its myth of itself, the fantastic self-image which it tried to create for the world. Dostoevsky gathered this self-image primarily from two sources: the famous (or infamous) *Catechism of a Revolutionary*—a small book written in code and printed in Latin script—which contained the precepts of what Bakunin called Nechayev's "system"; and the Bakunin-Nechayev propaganda issued in the spring and summer of 1869. Let us see in a little more detail what use Dostoevsky made of this material.

THE POWER OF Peter Verkhovensky in *The Devils* is based on his claim to be the representative of a secret, world-wide, revolutionary organisation situated vaguely in Europe, and which he had contacted in Switzerland. Nechayev in fact carried credentials attesting that he was representative No. 2771 of the "Russian Section of the World Revolutionary Alliance"; and these credentials, signed by Bakunin, were also stamped with the seal of the "Central Committee" of a "European Revolutionary Alliance." Neither of these organisations existed anywhere except in the vast reaches of Bakunin's conspiratorial imagination. It is doubtful whether Nechayev—who had presented himself to Bakunin as the representative of an equally fictitious revolutionary committee of Russian students—really placed much faith in the power or efficacity of these bodies. But he was perfectly content to use the aura of Bakunin's prestige, and the looming shadow of these all-powerful organisations, to impress his dupes in Moscow. To reinforce his authority, he once arrived at a meeting of his group with a stranger (an inoffensive visiting student from Petersburg) whom he introduced as a member of the "Central Committee," and who sat silently all through the session taking notes. Present at the meeting at Virginsky's in *The Devils* is also "a young artillery officer who . . . scarcely taking any part in the conversation, continually made notes in his notebook." Peter Verkhovensky, however, supplements him by the more glamorous Stavrogin, whom he instructs to come to the meeting as "one of the original members from abroad, who knows the most important secrets—that's your role."

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Nechayev's career almost from the very start is marked by a systematic use of falsehood and deceit, not only against the enemies of his cause, but also toward his allies and followers. Such a policy was consciously affirmed as a principle in the *Catechism*, which states that

> the degree of friendship, of devotion, and of other obligations toward . . . a comrade is measured only by his degree of utility in the practical work of revolutionary pan-destruction.

Peter Verkhovensky only reveals the "secrets" of his activity—namely, that there really are no "secrets," and that he is acting entirely on his own—to Stavrogin, who is the key to his revolutionary plan; all the rest of his followers he considers "raw material," who are to be used and manipulated as he sees fit for the good of the cause. Such manipulation was foreseen in the paragraph of the *Catechism* devoted to "revolutionary chatterers" (a perfect description of the group at Virginsky's), who were to be

> pushed and involved without ceasing into political and dangerous manifestations, whose result will be to make the majority disappear, while some among them will become revolutionaries.

It is in accordance with this ruthless application of the principle of utility that Nechayev disposed of Ivanov; and Dostoevsky's interpretation of the crime, whose motives continue to remain obscure, in no way violates the evidence. Whether Nechayev really believed that Ivanov would betray the underground group, or whether, as Dostoevsky was convinced, he wished to gain a hold on his followers by involving them in a crime against a troublesome dissident, still remains a mystery to this day. The Old Bolshevik and one-time editor of *Izvestia*, Yuri Steklov, in his massive biography of Bakunin, has carefully reviewed all the material on this point; and he comes to the same conclusion as Dostoevsky.

To silence Ivanov, Steklov writes, Nechayev had the choice either of abandoning his dictatorial methods, or,

> carrying to its extreme logical conclusion his characteristic system of terror and deceit, kill Ivanov, and in this way intimidate the remaining members of his organisation by linking them together in a bloody crime. Nechayev chose the second path, along which he was impelled by the logic of his chosen method of action on the one hand and, on the other, by his stubborn fanaticism and confidence in his great mission.

Verkhovensky arrives in the provincial town where the novel is set as the companion of the aristocratic Stavrogin, and also as an intimate of the equally wealthy Drozdov family. He has learned the secret of Stavrogin's perverse marriage to Marya Lebyadkina, and also of Liza Tushin's infatuation with Stavrogin. Whether by intimidation or by catering to Stavrogin's lusts, he hopes to use this knowledge to gain a hold over Stavrogin and exploit him for revolutionary purposes. Such manoeuvres are completely in conformity with the doctrines of the *Catechism*, which recognise that

> with the aim of implacable destruction a revolutionary may, and often must, live in the midst of society pretending to be quite different from what he really is.

And the aim of this disguise is, as with Peter Verkhovensky, to gain power over "the great number of highly-placed animals who, by their position, are rich and have relations." Such dupes

> must be exploited in every possible way, circumvented, confused, and, by acquiring their dirty secrets, be turned into our slaves. In this manner their power, their relations, their influence, and their riches will become an inexhaustible treasure and an invaluable aid in our various enterprises.

The same tactics are used by Peter Verkhovensky to gain control over the von Lembkes, whom he also exploits for his revolutionary aims. Through Stavrogin, Peter obtains a letter of introduction to Yulia Mikhailovna from "a very important old lady in Petersburg, whose husband was one of the most distinguished old dignitaries in the capital." Peter himself is rumoured to have gained the approbation of certain mysterious and powerful government personages by having repented of his past sins and "mentioned certain names." It would have been perfectly consistent for Nechayev to have sacrificed one or two comrades for the purpose of infiltrating the higher spheres; indeed such betrayal, as he admitted to Bakunin, was part of his "system."

ONCE ENTRENCHED in Yulia Mikhailovna's good graces, Peter encourages the giddy lady, who liked to flirt with "liberal" ideas, into believing that, with his help, she could scale the dizziest social heights and save Russia from disaster at the same time.

> To discover the plot, to receive the gratitude of the government, to enter on a brilliant career, to influence the young "by kindness," and to restrain them from extremes—all these dreams existed side by side in her fantastic brain.

Revolutionaries, the *Catechism* declares, should conspire with liberals "on the basis of their own programme, pretending to follow them blindly" but actually compromising them so that they can be "used to provoke disturbances in the State." Peter takes over Yulia Mikhailovna's innocent liberal "fête" for the benefit of the governesses of the province in exact accordance with these instructions, and turns it into a riotous manifestation of protest against the government.

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Peter's strategy with the dim-witted and bewildered Russo-German von Lembke, over whom he gains a hold both through Yulia Mikhailovna and through flattering his literary vanity, is directed toward attaining the same goal by different means. With him, Peter plays the *agent provocateur*; he spurs von Lembke on to harsh suppression of signs of unrest among the Shpigulin workers, and taxes von Lembke with being "too soft" and "liberal" in the performance of his gubernatorial duties. "But this has to be handled in the good old way," Peter jovially tells the hesitant von Lembke. "They ought to be flogged, every one of them; that would be the end of it." Peter's metamorphosis into an advocate of the "good old days" is justified by a passage in the *Catechism* requiring the revolutionary "to aid the growth of every calamity and every evil, which must, at last, exhaust the patience of the people and force them into a general uprising." It can also be linked to two of the Bakunin-Nechayev pamphlets supposedly issued by the "Descendants of Rurik and the Noble's Revolutionary Committee." These pamphlets preached the most outrageously reactionary sentiments, and were intended to stir up right-wing, oligarchical opposition to Tsarist autocracy. These pamphlets probably suggested Peter's friendship with the retired Colonel Gaganov—who challenges Stavrogin to a duel—and who resigned from the Army partly because he "suddenly felt himself personally insulted by the proclamation" of the liberation of the serfs. Gaganov is described, significantly, as a person who "belonged to that strange section of the nobility, still surviving in Russia, who set an extreme value on their pure and ancient lineage" (*i.e.*, "the descendants of Rurik").

SOURCES AND PARALLELS for every other politico-ideological feature of *The Devils*, even those that seem the most extravagant and the least credible, can also be found either in the Bakunin-Nechayev propaganda or in other easily identifiable material linked with the radical agitation of the 1860s.

Peter Verkhovensky's use of Fedka the convict as the executing arm of the revolution brings to life (rather feebly, it is true) the advice given in the *Catechism* for the revolutionaries to unite "with the fierce world of the bandits," who are "the sole and genuine revolutionaries in Russia." Along with this Romantic glorification of the fearsome bandit of Russian folklore, the propaganda is also filled with blood-curdling exhortations and apocalyptic images of total destruction.

> We must dedicate ourselves to whole-hearted destruction, continuous, unflagging, unslackening, until none of the existing social forms remain to be destroyed. . . .
>
> 'Poison, the knife, the noose. . . . The revolution sanctifies everything in this battle.'

Peter Verkhovensky only echoes such passages when he cries:

> "We shall proclaim destruction . . . why? why? well, because it is such a fascinating little idea! . . . Every scurvy 'group' will be of use. I'll find you fellows so eager in these groups that they'll be glad to shoot and will be grateful for the honour. . . . There's going to be such an upheaval as the world has never seen before."

Nothing is more striking, in this Bakunin-Nechayev propaganda, than its total negativism, the complete absence of any positive aim or goal that would justify the horrors it contemplates. Such a positive aim, in any specific sense, is outlawed on principle as an historical impossibility, which must remain wrapped in the Messianic obscurity of the future. "Since the existing generation," we read, "is itself exposed to the influence of those loathsome social conditions against which it is revolting, to this generation cannot belong the work of construction. This belongs to those pure forces that will be formed in the day of renovation." This negativism helps to explain why Peter Verkhovensky sets himself off so sharply from "Socialists" like Shigalov, who *do* worry about the form of the future existing social order, and why, as a true revolutionary, Peter dedicates himself only to the work of uprooting the existing moral-social norms.

"But one or two generations of vice are essential now," he tells Stavrogin; "monstrous, abject vice by which a man is transformed into a loathsome, cruel, egoistic reptile. . . . I am not contradicting myself, I am only contradicting the philanthropists and Shigalovism, not myself! I am a scoundrel, not a Socialist!" Marx and Engels, it should be mentioned, thoroughly confirmed Dostoevsky's distinction on this point; and the Bakunin-Nechayev propaganda was one of the weapons they used to evict Bakunin and his followers from the First International. "These all-destroying anarchists" they wrote severely, "who wish to reduce everything to amorphousness in order to replace morality by anarchy, carry bourgeois immorality to its final extreme."

Peter Verkhovensky's contemptuous indifference to Socialism and Socialist theory is well brought out by his behaviour at the "birthday party" at Virginsky's; and this indifference reflects a constant keynote in the Bakunin-Nechayev writings. "The modest and far too cautious formation of secret societies, without any overtly practical consequences, is, in our eyes, nothing more than a childish game, ludicrous and loathsome." Peter is a little more tactful, but he does not conceal his inexpressible boredom.

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" 'You see, gentlemen'—he raised his eyes a trifle—"to my mind all these books, Fourier, Cabet, all this talk about the right to work and Shigalov's theories—are all like novels of which one can write a hundred thousand—an aesthetic entertainment.' "

Peter's sarcasm exactly duplicates the tone of contempt that one can find in the leaflets on the same subject. "In the Cossack groups formed by Vassili Usom in Astrakhan at the time of Stenka Razin," one leaflet declares, "the ideal goal of social equality was achieved in an immeasurably superior fashion to the phalansteries of Fourier, the institutions of Cabet, Louis Blanc and other learned Socialists, better even than in the associations of Chernyshevsky."

EVEN WHEN Dostoevsky has not been accused of misrepresenting the Nechayev affair, he has invariably been accused of giving a misleading picture in *The Devils* of the Russian radical movement as a whole. Nechayev was incontestably an isolated phenomenon among the radical groups of the 1860s, and his systematic Machiavellianism was alien to the other major groupings of the radical intelligentsia (though it appeared embryonically here and there all the same). In point of fact, however, Dostoevsky never tries to give any other impression. Peter Verkhovensky's relations with the members and sympathisers of his underground organisation are a continual struggle to overcome their opposition and mistrust. Nobody at the meeting really agrees with Verkhovensky, but he browbeats them into submission by playing on their vanity and curiosity; all agree to go "full steam ahead" in order to hear his mysterious "communication" from the all-powerful organisation he claims to represent. Just before Shatov's murder even the members of Verkhovensky's inner group are panic-stricken at what has occurred—the fire, the various murders, the riots and disorders—and decide that, unless Verkhovensky gives them a "categorical explanation," they will "dissolve the quintet . . . and found instead a new secret society 'for the propaganda of ideas on their own and on the basis of democracy and equality'." Shigalov, at the last moment, refuses to have anything to do with the murder as a matter of principle; Virginsky never stops protesting even while it is taking place. It is quite clear that, however much Dostoevsky caricatures them as people, the members of the "quintet" do not believe in systematic amorality and universal destruction as panaceas for the ills of the Russian social order.

NO CHARACTER in *The Devils* has aroused more comment and more indignation than Shigalov, whom Dostoevsky originally calls Zaitsev in his notes. This radical publicist was distinguished among his confrères by his extreme theoretical élitism and his ill-starred defence of Negro slavery on the basis of Social Darwinism; Shigalov too is an honest democratic radical who ends up, much to his dismay, favouring the "slavery" of the masses to an omnipotent radical élite.

> I am perplexed by my own data and my conclusion is in direct contradiction of the original idea from which I start. . . . Starting from unlimited freedom, I arrive at unlimited despotism.

A "lame teacher" who has read his manuscript explains his idea, whose biological basis is obvious.

> Shigalov suggests . . . the division of mankind into two unequal parts. One-tenth enjoys absolute liberty and unbounded power over the other nine-tenths. The others have to give up all individuality and become, so to speak, a herd, and, through boundless submission, will by a series of regenerations attain primeval innocence, something like the Garden of Eden.

One might imagine that Dostoevsky here has simply let his satirical fantasy run wild, and that there would be no source whatever for Shigalov's plan to create "the earthly Paradise" by selective Socialist breeding. No such source can be found in Zaitsev, to be sure; but it *can* be found in the writings of P. N. Tkachev, once a contributor to Dostoevsky's magazine *Vremya*, who was associated with Nechayev in agitation among the Petersburg students in 1869. Like Zaitsev much influenced by Social Darwinism, Tkachev believed that justice could not be achieved except in a world of total equality. But this, he wrote, "must by no means be confused with political or legal or even economic equality"; it meant "an *organic, physiological* equality conditioned by the same education and the same living standards." (Italics

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added.) For Tkachev, such equality was "the final and only possible aim of human life . . . the supreme criterion of historical and social progress." Dostoevsky was surely parodying Tkachev when Peter Verkhovensky exclaims: "Shigalov is a man of genius [because] he's discovered 'equality'."

> Great intellects cannot help being despots and they've always done more harm than good. . . . Cicero will have his tongue cut out, Copernicus will have his eyes put out. Shakespeare will be stoned—that's Shigalovism! Slaves must be equal: there has never been either freedom or equality without despotism, but in the herd there's bound to be equality and that's Shigalovism!

It would be possible to continue this demonstration with further examples, drawn not so much from the Nechayev affair as from the general social history of the period. For example, Peter's mad plan to seize power by turning Stavrogin into Ivan the Tsarevich, the pretender to the throne of the Tsar, is manifestly inspired by the Russian folk-tradition that had impelled all the leaders of peasant uprisings in Russian history to claim to be the rightful and legitimate Tsar. This tradition of peasant obedience to the Tsar, whatever their hatred of the land-owning class, had been exploited without much success by the radicals of the 1860s, particularly during the Polish rebellion; and there is a mocking reference to such attempts in Dostoevsky's notes. But the evidence already given should be enough to show the procedure that Dostoevsky used, and the extent to which the usual accusations against him must be qualified.

Nothing in *The Devils* on the political level (the same is true for the cultural, though this is not the place to argue the point) is simply invented out of whole cloth. Either Dostoevsky dramatises the "fantasy" of the Nechayev movement's own dreams and hopes, or he takes equally extreme and morally dubious historical events of a similar complexion and works them into his canvas. In so doing, he succeeded in creating the most brilliant and haunting work ever written about the moral quagmires, and the possibilities for self-betrayal of the highest principles, which—as we have learned most recently from Solzhenitsyn—continue to dog the destiny of "the Revolution."

The Vanity of Poetry

The thing well made or not, the distraught man walks
Among women and conferences with The Chosen One
By his side, whom he humiliates, then baulks
The broad professor, insults the Arts Official, knows
That the field of folk opens only to his sun
While girls go down, and museums buy his prose.

The truth is always true and always his and his
Alone. He takes a constitutional among
The valley flowers: bees are in a vertical tizz,
Nature is action painting and he's Nature's love;
Never the leech gatherer, never hurt or stung
By anything; he plays, and stays impossibly above.

Days end in his excitement, mortal days open
On his question: yes, and he was moved by this,
Your secret feeling for his dark Socratic when
And how he thinks like Hölderlin. Some vanity
May yet suffice to turn a plain returning kiss
Into Diotima's love, and fake him into poetry.

Peter Porter

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FILM

The Case of the Vanishing Bloodstains

By Alexander Walker

Holmes bent over this grotesque frieze for some minutes and then suddenly sprang to his feet with an exclamation of surprise and dismay. His face was haggard with anxiety.

"We have let this affair go far enough," said he.

THE DANCING MEN.

ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO a change came over the character of death on the cinema screen. What came into being has been called "medical materialism," a phrase I owe to Dr Jonathan Miller. By this he meant that death, which had hitherto been a fairly ritual affair, was turning into an anatomy lesson, or, rather, an autopsy.

Previously the gun barked, the victim jack-knifed, a token bloodstain welled up on his shirt front, another public enemy lay down and died. The damage was more sartorial than arterial; and the censor's work was correspondingly simplified, since deserving justice had been seen to be done and there was really no mess to speak of. It is curious considering the high place that *ciné-verité* techniques occupy in the screen's approach to life that the film which probably did more than any other to change this approach to death has been overlooked, in spite of being seen by more people in the world than any other American movie.

Let me momentarily conceal the event it recorded, as well as the names of the parties at the centre of it, and quote instead from a synopsis written some time afterwards but very like the "continuity" script that's put together from the completely edited film:

> The [car] continues to slow down. The interior is a place of horror. The last bullet has torn through [his] cerebellum, the lower part of his brain. Leaning towards her husband [she] has seen a piece of his skull detach itself. At first there is no blood. And then, in the very next instant, there is nothing but blood spattering him. . . . Gobs of blood as thick as a man's hand are soaking the floor of the back seat, [his] clothes are steeped in it, the roses are drenched, [his] body is lurching soundlessly towards his wife, and Motor Cycle Police Officer Hargis, two feet from her, is doused in the face by a red sheet. To Kellerman it appears that the air is full of moist sawdust.'[1]

Those who have read William Manchester's landmark piece of investigative reporting, *The Death of a President*, will hardly need to be told by now that what this describes is the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas in November 1963.

But what makes it relevant to this enquiry into the contemporary cinema's approach to death is the way that Manchester duplicates the effect of a camera's eye seeing in slow motion, and thereby giving itself the *time* to see, the bloody havoc accompanying the onset of sudden and extremely public death. As well as the eye-witnesses he names, Manchester had indeed the supplementary evidence of a camera's eye—the one with the famous Zoomar lens being wielded by Abe Zapruder, the garment manufacturer and amateur cinematographer who happened to be filming the Presidential motorcade at the precise moment of the assassination. In the 8.3 seconds which it took the colour film to register it on 152 frames the most notorious piece of "medical materialism" was recorded to be later relayed throughout the world during one of the most deeply shared periods of grief in history.

IT IS ODD HOW this reproduction of an event dramatically heightens it. As the narrator in Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* says, "The colours of the real world only seem really real when you viddy them on the screen. . . ." Not that the Zapruder film recorded the anatomical detail of the Manchester "scenario", although once the posthumous event is treated to an "action replay"—as it was, countless times in the course of the subsequent enquiries, lay and official—one seems to be seeing it broken down into the factions of time in a slow-motion version.

[1] William Manchester *The Death of a President*, (1967), p. 196.

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Over the years it has assumed an iconographic vividness irresistible to any film-maker disposed to draw his inspiration from an historical and moral shock of its magnitude.

So one is not at all surprised to find this confirmed in an Arthur Penn interview in *Les Cahiers du Cinema*, four years after Kennedy's assassination, in which the director of *Bonnie and Clyde* explicitly refers to the earlier event when speaking of the fusillade of 87 bullets fired at the end of his film into the eponymous hero and heroine. "We put on the bullet holes," says Penn, "and there's even a piece of Warren's [Beatty's] head that comes off, like that famous photograph of Kennedy."[2] In fact if one turns to the screenplay of *Bonnie and Clyde*, written by David Newman and Robert Benton, what one finds is an eerie echo of the precise, present-tense tone of the Manchester "scenario" which came out in the same year as the film, 1967:

> We see alternately the bodies of CLYDE and BONNIE twisting, shaking, horribly distorted; much of the action is in slow motion. CLYDE is on the ground, his body arching and rolling from the impact of the bullets. BONNIE is still in her seat; her body jerking and swaying as the bullets thud relentlessly into her and the framework of the car.
>
> EXTERIOR THE CAR ON THE VERGE.
>
> BONNIE's body slews out sideways, head first. A final burst and her head and shoulders drop down on to the running board. CLYDE's body rolls over and over on the ground and then lies still. The firing stops.[3]

The reason Penn used a slow-motion technique at this point in the film was to get what he called "the spasm of death," and a most sophisticated technique it was. It involved no fewer than four cameras shooting at 24, 48, 72 and 96 frames a second "so that I could cut to get the shock and at the same time the ballet of death. There's a moment in death when the body no longer functions, when it becomes an object and has a certain kind of detached ugly beauty. . . ."

NOW ANYONE WHO TALKS of the "beauty" of death is treading in a grey area of aesthetics; yet can anyone doubt that Penn acquitted himself responsibly in *Bonnie and Clyde*? Freely admitting to the fascination he found in rendering the kinetic effects of violence, which is what makes it so dangerously appealing where most spectators of events real or imaginary are concerned, he nevertheless saves himself from the charge of mortuary gloating by what one can only call an act of charity towards his victims. While slow motion gives us the time to see them die by protracting the moment of death into an eternity, it nevertheless withholds the full destructive force of the medical materialism which 87 bullets ripping into two people would have conveyed to us. They would have literally been torn apart. What really horrifies us is the "overkill" nature of the lawmen, almost believing that their victims had charmed lives and must be filled with their own weight of lead. All the same their outlines are intact as they lie there, like effigies. What Penn has done is extinguish the life but preserve the legend.

WHEN WE NEXT SAW slow-motion used to record the violent rhythms of death it was in a far more materialistic cause. Sam Peckinpah's film *The Wild Bunch* also derived from the Kennedy assassination, more precisely from the debate on the role of the gun in American life which in the aftermath of this event and the deaths of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, looked like ushering in far tighter curbs on the sale and ownership of firearms in a society traditionally based on a man's right to bear and use them.

Peckinpah's film celebrated the power of the gun by showing it in action, which meant showing the bloody destruction contained in one split second. Blood spurts like a drinking fountain from a burst artery in the opening massacre, a body bumps up off the ground like a rubber toy, dust rises in slow motion, a limb trails out at a ghastly angle as if in a state of weightlessness and the corpse settles down with a spasm that has the effect in slow motion of a small avalanche. *The Wild Bunch* always keeps returning to the gun. It is the hero if anything is, far more so than the human beings, a bunch of ageing cowboys feeling their obsolescence, whereas their guns will go marching on into the new century, coming out in ever improving models. The brand-new machine-gun that goes off like a fractious baby in the arms of the ignorant peon cuddling it is a quantum leap into totalitarian destructiveness.

But what is the film saying to us? This is more difficult to answer and even after a prudent second viewing I am driven to conclude that it *says* nothing for the very reason that it *shows* everything. The end doesn't simply justify the means, as it always does in a Peckinpah film; the end is the means in the way (remember?) that the medium is the message.

[2] *Les Cahiers du Cinema* (December 1967), Arthur Penn interviewed by André Labarthe and Jean-Louis Comolli.

[3] *The Bonnie and Clyde Book*, compiled and edited by Sandra Wake and Nicola Hayden. Simon & Schuster, New York; Lorrimer, London, pp. 162–4.

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Now this should have put us on our guard. I know that some people were; but to me, reviewing the film at the time, its bloody excesses seemed justified as a response to the contemporary wave of revulsion against violence. I am far less certain of this now, especially after Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs*—which I shall return to. In any case there were other omens we should have read about the cinema's attitude to the new violence. As Pauline Kael put it once, "immediately something enters mass culture, it travels fast." Which in this case meant not only the new presentation of death, but the film industry's hope of new life for itself. What we're apt to forget is that it isn't really a creative industry: it is an imitative one in which only a few creative people at any time are tolerated. Commercial opportunism which can present an honest face to the world by the opportunities it gives an artist frequently shows a cruder and truer side in the way it sells his work. The lyrical spell of *Bonnie and Clyde*, presented as "Lovers" on the posters at the film's opening, swiftly dissolved into a keener pitch for the audience's emotions once they moved into the hinterland and became "Killers."

Over the last few years one has witnessed a whole arsenal of death-dealing weapons coming to dominate the cinema posters, in Britain anyhow, as the central, selling feature of the film and irresistibly recalling the swollen organs of potency commonplace in every porn book. (A prospective Ph.D. would find richly rewarding territory to research in the psychopathology of cinema advertising.) Of course every true craftsman is vulnerable to exploitation by the trade he works in; but the film industry's sense of where the appeal lies is shown to be fairly accurate by the box-office success which is being enjoyed to a phenomenal degree by the quantum leap into human physical destruction and violent death.

A FRIEZE OF DEATH has stretched across the screen since *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Wild Bunch* initiated the "action autopsy" approach to it or, in Joseph Morgenstern's phrase, tried "to explore the nature of life with the aesthetics of death." To follow the trail of bloodstains makes a profoundly disquieting pursuit. And when the perplexed Watson reaches the point where he cries, "There are no more bloodstains," one must sympathise with the inevitable reply from Holmes, "Yes, that is the most disquieting thing of all."

I DON'T THINK it was accidental that the curve of violence in films began its steep rise just about the time one would expect the new Hollywood films, which had profited from the 1965–66 revision of the Production Code to deal with sex more and more candidly, began to face the problem of their subsequent sale to television. Sex undressed is patently sex; violence on the other hand can be dressed up as many things. Moreover, the motion-picture code, reflecting the taboos of the early Legion of Decency and the Roman Catholic Church as well as the truisms at the centre of the American historical experience, was basically more tolerant to the depiction of violence than sex. One has also to reckon with a number of film-makers, all men whose forte lay in the harsh-grained action film, now finding that the dangerous but exhilarating tide of fashion was running with them and even propelling their ingrained aggressiveness along almost faster than they could keep up with it.

The world's escalating violence finds its most vivid metaphor in the movies; which is not to say that the movies predispose us to add to the violence. But as the power of certain films proves so strong that we tend to conceptualise real events in their terms I think that it may predispose us to tolerate violence, or at least its latest form when it is succeeded by some new and awful escalation. The imitative pressures of the industry drive its film-makers to let themselves rip on a spiralling ascent into new levels of death and destruction until it "peaks" in some explosive display of psychopathy.

For film censors, this creates increasingly difficult problems. One of the recent crises, according to many commentators, came near to dislodging the new British incumbent, Mr Stephen Murphy, who learned in his first few painful months in office that he was caught between two irreconcilable duties—protecting the public from the excesses of the film-makers and at the same time shielding the film-makers from the intolerance of the public. Central to this crisis was the new character of death on the screen.

I AM NOT GOING TO ALLUDE in any detail to the two films over which the debate raged, *Straw Dogs* and *A Clockwork Orange*, for they have already been examined in articles and correspondence in ENCOUNTER. But as the person largely responsible for initiating the letter signed by 13 prominent British film critics and published in *The Times* at the end of 1971, I may perhaps be allowed to fill in some of the less well-defined aspects of the controversy where they are relevant to this theme.

This is the more necessary since a belief has grown up, at least amongst those who don't read letters to the Press all that carefully, that the British film critics in the main wanted to see *Straw Dogs* banned. In fact we did deplore its almost psychopathic obsession with violence; but this is not the same as demanding its suppression. I believe none of the signatories would have sup-

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ported this, especially as we were protesting in the same letter against the censor's own suppression of the Andy Warhol/Paul Morrissey film *Trash* which he had denied a certificate.

Now the British film censors have always protested that they are more concerned with violence in films than with sex—the reverse of the American attitude—yet many of us felt that here was a case of one film being penalised because it dealt with aberrant forms of sex while the other was passed for public viewing in spite of its manic degree of bloody violence and even sexual violence. At the time of the protest to *The Times* none of us was aware of the prior history of *Straw Dogs* at the hands of the British censor; not that it would have modified anyone's attitude, I think (and it might conceivably have hardened some people's).

In brief Mr Murphy had viewed the film which Sam Peckinpah had shot in Britain when it was in its final rough-cut, an unofficial procedure sometimes resorted to by his predecessor, Mr John Trevelyan, when it was a question of "tricky" material requiring a helpful indication of attitude on the censor's part before he or his examiners were asked to pass it officially. Mr Murphy advised the producer and distributor that he did not feel able to pass it in its present form. When it was officially submitted some weeks later he was gratified to find his advice had been heeded. The shot of a man's guts being blown out of him by a double-barrelled gun had gone; the protracted rape scene in which two youths assaulted the hero's wife had been broken up by cuts to the absent husband on his duck shoot; and the double rape had been shortened although the unintentional effect of this was to make it appear as if the unfortunate girl, caught the wrong side up after the "conventional" assault on her, was now being buggered as well!

Even in its surviving form the rape was one of the most protracted and calculated acts of sexual violence I and others had seen on the screen up to then, the girl being beaten into submission and then having her scanty clothing ripped slowly off her to the accompaniment of the noise of tearing material which showed how Peckinpah knew the emotive value of the sound as well as the sight of violence.

But it was the climacteric of violence when Dustin Hoffman is forced to abandon his pacifist stance against the wild bunch of assailants and turn into a somewhat unlikely vest-pocket Hercules, which revealed the ferocious extent of the film's anti-humanism. Bodies were filled with buckshot, beaten insensible with iron bars; one man accidentally blew off his own foot and was left gawping at a close-up of the shattered stump; and the *specialité* of this particular *maison* came when the last assailant alive, or conscious, choked to death with his head caught in the toothed jaws of a game-keeper's mantrap.

THERE WAS A DIFFERENCE, though, compared to *The Wild Bunch* whose slow-motion techniques also found their way into the mayhem. This film said something as well as showed it—namely that a man needed to be put in touch with his primal instincts before he could call himself a Man. Peckinpah had come out of hiding with this one. Instead of bidding an elegiac valedictory to *The Wild Bunch* and giving a helpless shrug at the continuing rule of the gun, he appeared as the champion of the Superman and gave his blessing to the machismo ethic which equates violence with virility, and suffering with manliness. *"The knock at the door meant the birth of a man and the death of seven others,"* was the film's publicity slogan in Britain. I am not sure if the same shameless advertisement for the totalitarian ethic prevailed in America: but I am told by the British distributor that it was the director's own invention. It was odd that with this staring him in the face from every hoarding the British censor stoutly maintained his own reading of the film's last spoken line when Hoffman echoes the words of the pathetic village idiot who says he doesn't know the way home. The censor's interpretation of this gnomic aside is that it shows how far he has lost his moral bearings. On a more prosaic level it could equally mean he has no intention of hitting the trail back to his tramp of a wife. What indignation the British critics' attack on *Straw Dogs* aroused from some of the non-signatories to *The Times* letter came from sources whose film criticism confines itself to matters of style and technique. It was entirely appropriate as a response to Peckinpah's picture. "Like" was reviewing "like", without experiencing any need for intervening matters of intention or morality.

It is also a matter of record, well documented in this journal, that Stanley Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* was caught up in the moral backlash unleashed by some of the non-professional interest groups, notably the Festival of Light's divinely appointed *illuminati* and the egregiously recruited members of Lord Longford's anti-pornography committee. These investigators discovered embarrassingly late in the day that violence was now the "in" thing. To his credit the censor had passed Kubrick's film uncut before the deluge: it is to be hoped his courage would have withstood the subsequent outcry.

A Clockwork Orange is a useful reminder that in this enquiry we must pay more regard to intention than content measured in quantitative terms. Though Kubrick's film has its violent sequences (not so many of them as the outcry might lead us

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to expect), it is a film that's really about choice, not violence. While Peckinpah asserts that a man only becomes a man when he kills, Kubrick is saying that a man ceases to be a man if he cannot choose. Better that he should have the right to choose, even if it is the right to sin, than that his moral functioning should be replaced by the programmed mechanism of the State. What violence there is is not of the medically materialist nature. Very little physical injury is depicted, though much is suggested, and what there is gets "distanced" from the audience by the "ballet" of the gang fight and the "vaudeville" of the assault-and-rape to the melody of "Singin' in the Rain."

I happened to be present while Kubrick shot the death of the Cat Woman, brained by the sculptured phallus, and it was a matter of lengthy deliberation by him not to let any physical injury be seen. This was to preserve the scene's nightmare dimension. For it's well known that in dreaming the mind's censor tends to exclude this kind of anatomical gruesomeness which would otherwise jerk the dreamer awake by his own too horrible imaginings. Kubrick's regard for the quality of the story as a "controlled dream" made him take the same precautions.

BUT AS ONE MOVES ALONG the bloodstained trail to *The Godfather* one enters some extremely dark territory. By late August last year, when Francis Ford Coppola's film opened in Britain, the censor had finally screwed himself to the sticking place where he was now prepared to pass the Warhol/Morrissey movie, *Trash*, which had languished for nearly a year, with an *"X"* Certificate as well as substantial cuts. (An *"X"* in Britain excludes any person under 18 years of age.) He reached a decision over *The Godfather* with far less moral wrestling, giving it an *"X"* Certificate, too, but insisting on the smallest imaginable cut, namely a nine-second trim towards the end of the scene where "Sonny" has run into the vendetta at the toll-gate and been slaughtered by the rival Mafia. The censor thought it inadvisable to show one of the gang kicking the inert body: on the old British principle, I suppose, that you should never kick a man when he's down, even if he's dead.

Now the feast of death that *The Godfather* provides is so well known that I may be spared running through the obits. I only observe that the garrottings, assassinations and serial slayings have their appeal deftly enhanced by the care taken never to repeat the slaughter in quite the same way twice. It is the principle of pornography, too. In contrast, what the censor advised should be cut out of *Trash*, in order to give it an *"X"* Certificate, was almost entirely sexual and included a fellatio scene (shortened) and a moment when a beer bottle was put to an unusual use to obtain an orgasm (though as the self-pleasurer was a male-in-drag it remains a mystery what arcane technique the censor ascribed to him/her). The interpretation is irresistible—that the film censor deplores violence, but what he cuts is sex.

FOR ANYONE operating on this double standard *The Godfather* is a gift. For in spite of being one of the most continuously violent films ever made, it contains absolutely no sex—none at all. This has escaped general notice, perhaps by its very obviousness. It was brought home to me by the satisfaction with which a rather staid friend, who had frequently deplored the growing permissiveness of the movies, expressed his pleasure to me that here at last was a film to which he could take his wife without embarrassment. No distressing full frontals, you see, at least not where sex was concerned. I think he might have been more appalled, or maybe his wife would have been, if one of the early victims whose gun hand is skewered to the bar with a knife while his throat is garrotted had been in a state of nudity at the time.

A film cannot be estimated to earn 150 million dollars world-wide without this layman's opinion of what is decent for him and his wife to see being shared by the majority of those who will go to *The Godfather*. Indeed the audience reaction is interesting. I saw the film several times, having had to take along friends from backward countries, lands where *The Godfather* hadn't been opened, and on each occasion the audience sat dumbly through the plethora of Mafia killings. When they did react audibly it was only once, a low collective whistle of shock at the end when the "godson" deliberately lies to his wife. Seeing death at its most anatomically violent on the screen had apparently lost its power to repel: lying to your wife, on the other hand, is still something that goes home to the heart of the petit bourgeoisie. Nothing else has so sharply indicated to me how the tolerance-level of violence is rising.

I don't ascribe the fact that the film fails to shock or outrage to the nice-safe feeling it paradoxically generates—keeping death inside the family, so to speak. Of course these Mafia bosses are "golden oldies"—the slaughter of '46 out of the summer of '42. But distance lending security to the viewer doesn't satisfactorily explain its appeal. As I see it, we are witnessing a far more frightening phenomenon than the deaths on the screen; we are witnessing nothing less than the death of people's humanity. We have been so raped by violence that we are like the daughter heeding her mother's injunction as she leaves on a dubious date: that if you can't resist it, lie back and enjoy it. And even this residual pleasure is losing its savour. It is drying up the way the emotions are on the screen. Death no longer has

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any humanity, so it can offer no purgative satisfaction. Not even our pity is solicited. Man-made monsters once had hearts, which broke even as they crushed their makers. Now all they exhibit is the coolness of successful psychopaths—no emotions whatsoever. There is scarcely a gangster film out of the 1930s which hadn't some particle of humanity embedded in it, besides the slugs of rivals for the South Side, even if it was only misguided mother-love for Jimmy Cagney.

In the second half of *The Godfather* an extraordinary change comes over Al Pacino which is relevant to this. At the start of the film it is almost as if Paramount were making him into a 1940s *Love Story* figure, with his air of diminished cuddliness as he nibbles his courtship on the fringe of the family. When he takes over power (and the story) he reverts to a much earlier decade than the 1940s: he affects the glossy, brushed-back hair-style and close-fitting wardrobe of the 1930s. He appears a stereotype companion to Humphrey Bogart and George Raft except in one vital respect. The movie still assigns to him the arid, passionless, mechanistic ethos which is its own attitude to all human life in the 1970s. Its nostalgia only goes back so far: when it comes to the killing, it is bang up to date.

The Mechanic may look like a freelance *Godfather*, operating exogamously against any target he is paid to eliminate. In Michael Winner's film, as in *The Godfather*, one is overwhelmed by the same emotionally drained attitude to death. But whereas the "godson" reminds his doubting girl-friend that "everybody kills today, the Army, the Government, Big Business," the professional assassin in *The Mechanic* takes this acceptance of the world as it is to its logical conclusion and propagandises that anybody has the right to kill anybody. The same refrain was heard from the acolytes of Charles Manson. It is language being used as an instrument of murder. *The Mechanic* in fact takes it a stage beyond Manson. Charles Bronson's assassin doesn't kill for the thrill of it all; to him, it is simply "the Job," carried out dispassionately upon receipt of a registered envelope of instructions. Whom he kills, much less why, we are never told. What does it matter, since the act of killing is all that counts? We have come a long way in the few years from the pathetic dimension of the massacre in which Bonnie and Clyde died and made us care to the almost bloodless killings of *The Mechanic* in which we don't know who dies and couldn't care less.

There are literally "clean" killings. The only scene in which I can recall blood actually flowing and lingered over is the one in which the jilted girl-friend of the mechanic's young male apprentice deliberately severs her wrists with a razor blade as the two men sit looking on.

Her pitiful gesture is an attempt to move at least one of them into emotional involvement with her; they simply regard her suicide as the test of how "cool" they can remain. Such men are smooth operators; but their essence is their refusal to sympathise, to become involved. It is the black side of Kennedy's avowal of "grace under pressure"—"coolness under stress." The essay on *The White Negro* which Norman Mailer wrote in 1957 praising the "psychopathic brilliance" of the hip style that models itself on the Black experience has been brought to life in *The Mechanic*—if "life" is the word for a mode of existence dedicated to keeping on top by extinguishing all human feelings and maintaining one's mechanistic responses in trim for taking human life.

In an earlier script, I am told, the liaison in *The Mechanic* between both men was homosexual as well as homicidal. Even that has been siphoned out of them, leaving only their mutual boast that in a society which is actually no better than they are, the psychopath is king.

Even this is not the film's most ominous feature. The way it has been *accepted* is highly unsettling. Far from being given a British *"X"* Certificate, putting it on the same shelf beside *The Godfather*, it has drawn a straight *"AA"* Certificate, a much milder rating allowing 14-year-old children to see it. This view is presumably based on the belief that in its externals it differs little from a standard gangster drama of the 1930s. There could scarcely be a more dangerous misreading of its essential significance. In it as in other films we are being asked to accept the ascendancy of the Psychopath, the man who has no doubts, knows no fears, experiences no guilt, feels no humanity, but simply acts in the only way he believes gives meaning to a society in which the rejection of restraints has become epidemic. He kills.

FROM THE ADDITION OF medical materialism to its repertoire, the cinema has passed on to the celebration of moral anarchy. And it has us staring at the panorama as ambiguously as the Mechanic himself stares at the reproduction of the Bosch painting known alternatively as *Earthly Pleasures* or as *Lust*, depicting a carnival of hideous fantasies, which hangs on his living-room wall. Is it a foretaste of Hell that he draws from it? Or is it fresh inspiration? And is there any difference?

The bloodstains we've been following have given out: in the moral void in which much of the contemporary screen exists and flourishes, the only guide is our own fears.

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MUSIC

Who Wrote Stravinsky's Prose?

By B. H. Haggin

PART OF THE STRAVINSKY STORY of recent years has illustrated a statement of Goethe which Randall Jarrell once quoted: "In the face of the great superiority of another person there is no means of safety but love." But some, when faced by that superiority, find their safety in hate —the hate, someone remarked, of the untalented for the talented.

The love was seen first in the relation of Stravinsky and Robert Craft that began in 1948. As it happened, I heard Craft's first concerts at that time, and reported the remarkable performances of difficult works of Stravinsky that he produced with only two or three rehearsals of his small pick-up orchestra, chorus, and soloists—performances in which he demonstrated his impressive gifts as a musician and conductor in his knowledge of every detail of the works that was evident in what he asked of the performers and was able to get them to achieve. And I heard the concert in which Stravinsky participated, conducting his *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* and *Danses Concertantes*. It became known that Craft had written to Stravinsky about the *Symphonies* in connection with the performance he was planning, and that the letter had so impressed Stravinsky that he had offered to conduct the piece himself, and had done so without fee when Craft had told him he had no money.

The understanding and feeling about Stravinsky's music that Craft had revealed in the letter, the gifts he revealed at the rehearsals and concert, made understandable the continuing and close professional relation of Stravinsky and Craft in the years that followed, and also the extraordinary personal intimacy of Craft with Stravinsky and his wife. There come to mind an NBC Symphony musician's recollection of Toscanini sitting in Studio 8H at the rehearsals of young Guido Cantelli in 1949 and "beaming like a proud father", and my own recollection of Toscanini exclaiming "I love this young conductor! I think is like me when I was young. . . ." After so many years of loneliness in his idiosyncratic dealing with the music that was his obsession in life, Toscanini was experiencing the happiness provided by one in whom he found a continuation of his musical self, the son in his musical life with whom he had bonds of understanding, and inevitably of feeling, that he did not have with his musically ungifted actual son. And at that very time, as it happened, Stravinsky—grim, prickly, suspicious after his many battles as a ceaselessly innovative composer—also was establishing bonds of mutual understanding, devotion and love in a relation with a young musician that went even further than Toscanini's with Cantelli—to a point where Craft shared the personal life of the Stravinskys as, in effect, an adopted son.

One could understand that this might disturb, and be resented by, Stravinsky's children of his first marriage, and others close to him. But it was hard to understand the disapproval and hostility of people not personally connected with him, among them critics whose proper concern was solely with what he presented to their ears in public. Thus, Paul Henry Lang—a professor of musicology at Columbia University who demonstrated in the *New York Herald Tribune*, for more years than it required, that a scholar's knowledge did not give him a critic's perception and judgment or even the ability to think clearly—wrote repeatedly about the Stravinsky-Craft association as one in which Craft exercised a deplorable ascendancy over Stravinsky; and he was one of those who attributed to Craft's influence what he described as Stravinsky's "surrender of his essential musical personality to an alien faith" in the works he wrote after 1948. It was one thing to recognise, and regret, that his becoming acquainted with Schönberg's and Webern's music through Craft had resulted in Stravinsky writing works like *Movements, Variations* and *Requiem Canticles*, which many music-lovers, including me, found as meaningless and unattractive as the works of Schönberg and Webern. But it was another thing to attribute Stravinsky's writing them to an ascendancy of Craft over him which I, for one, found it impossible to believe anyone could exercise over so strong-minded a person as

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Stravinsky. And shortly before the concert in January 1960 at which Stravinsky conducted the première of *Movements*, an interview in the *Herald Tribune* had given Craft himself an opportunity to say:

> No one influences Stravinsky; he chooses his own . . . absorbs what he thinks is best for his own music. When I met him ke knew very little of Schönberg, apart from "Pierrot Lunaire", and the only Berg he knew was the Violin Concerto, which he didn't like. He'd never heard anything by Webern. Understand, I didn't take this music and slip it on his desk. I simply played it at all my concerts and he was there listening. . . . You can't go to Stravinsky and say, "Look, here is some music you should be interested in." He must find out about it on his own. No one *tells* Stravinsky anything.

CRAFT COULD HAVE SAID the same thing to those who were sure he must have written what Stravinsky said in their first volumes of published conversations, and in particular to Lang, who added offensiveness to improbability with his contention that Stravinsky, in those three volumes, was a mere puppet speaking what Craft, "the ventriloquist of God", got him to speak with his "questions, some straight, some leading, some loaded", and that "by now the collaboration has reached a stage where Mr Stravinsky should use the business designation 'A Division of Craft Products Inc.' " Craft, that is, could have answered that it was no more possible for anyone to tell Stravinsky what to think and say than for anyone to tell him what to compose. Nor did the actual questions and answers support Lang's contention (he did not cite a single example of what he claimed to be describing).

"The musical idea: when do you recognize it as an idea?" Craft asked, to make it possible for Stravinsky to say:

> When something in my nature is satisfied by some aspect of an auditive shape. But long before ideas are born I begin work by relating intervals rhythmically. This exploration of possibilities is always conducted at the piano. Only after I have established my melodic or harmonic relationships do I pass to composition. . . .

And so with the further questions: they clearly were devised to enable Stravinsky to say what he wanted to say about himself as a composer; what he recalled of his life, his musical education, his composing of particular works, the now historic events he had observed or had himself been involved in, the famous persons who had been involved in them with him; what he thought about the music of other composers, about jazz, about singing music in translation, and about other matters that interested him. The substance of what he said could be only his; what was known of him disposed one to believe that the powerful mind, the sharp eye for human character and behaviour, the grim sense of humour, the gift of pungent statement exhibited in the saying were also his; and strong evidence for the authenticity of the writing was provided by the next two volumes in the Stravinsky-Craft series, *Dialogues and a Diary* and *Themes and Episodes*, in which the concise, powerful and grimly humorous writing attributed to Stravinsky in the dialogues and the expansive, light and deft writing of Craft's diaries and other solo pieces presented the operation of two strikingly different minds. In addition, my own conjecture of the nature of the Stravinsky-Craft collaboration was confirmed by this statement in a letter of Stravinsky reprinted in *Themes and Episodes:*

> . . . My written language is more elegant than my spoken, but I have noticed that I share this fault with Mr Auden and Mr Eliot as well as with most "public personalities" I have met. It is also true that my colleague and collaborator, who is co-author of my books of conversations, polishes my language when it is ungrammatical or ungraceful but, then, assistance of this kind is also common and has been celebrated in such examples as Pound's help to Eliot, or Perkins's to Thomas Wolfe, or Ted Sorensen's to the late President Kennedy.

WHEN, THEREFORE, THE INEVITABLE question about the authenticity of Stravinsky's writing was asked, on one occasion early in 1968 at the Poetry Center of the Y.M.H.A. in New York, my reply was that Stravinsky was a strong-minded person who had shown himself inclined and able to speak for himself in the past, and whom I would expect to want to speak for himself now; that he would let someone else help him to improve his saying of what he had to say, but would not, I was sure, let his name be attached to the thinking of this other person; and that, for me, to read his writing and that of Craft was to be struck by the evidently different operation of two unmistakably different minds. This continued to be my view of the subject; and it was not changed by the sensational interview in the *New York Times*, in March of last year, in which Lillian Libman, who as Stravinsky's business manager for a dozen years had come to know a great deal about his private life, talked to one of the *Times*

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music-reviewers, Donal Henahan, about the book with her recollections that was to appear in the fall, and claimed that what had been published as Stravinsky's writing in books and articles had actually been written by Craft. My view was not changed by this claim because of the statements of Mrs Stravinsky and Craft that were reported in the *Times* the next day:

> Mrs Stravinsky says that the authenticity of the Stravinsky-Craft books . . . is indisputable. She says that for years she saw the two men working together. . . . Mr Craft went into further detail about the collaboration. ". . . Stravinsky would talk and I would write down exactly what he said. Later I would face him with his words, and he would throw out a lot. Finally we would decide on a finished version. . . ."

Craft thus spelled out specifically the procedure of the collaboration that Stravinsky had described in the statement I have quoted from *Themes and Episodes*. It was the procedure that had produced "the earlier books in the series," which Craft, in the *Times*, went on to characterise as "practically all autobiographical." But even the ones "toward the end", in which "the words were more mine than [Stravinsky's]", were produced by the procedure Craft described in this statement in the *New York Review of Books* a month later:

> What Miss Libman appears not to have been aware of is that Stravinsky's and my joint journalism was the result of hundreds of hours of, above all, listening to music, and of the most painstaking piecing together, on my part, of his thoughts and reactions.

For me this was confirmed by what one actually read in the later and last Stravinsky writings—the articles on Gesualdo's music and Beethoven's last quartets reprinted in *Retrospectives and Conclusions*, the comments on Debussy's *Pelléas et Mélisande* and Boulez's recorded performance of it in Stravinsky's very last article in the *New York Review of Books*, early in 1971: the musical perceptions, the musical judgments could be only Stravinsky's; and Craft was merely the transcriber and arranger of the words in which Stravinsky had expressed them as he had listened with Craft to the music and talked with him about it. It was Stravinsky who heard that the Boulez performance of *Pelléas* "is stylistically questionable . . . it overaccents and overarticulates (the dotted notes in the Interlude between the first two scenes of act 2 are too short and bouncy); substitutes forte for pianissimo (cf. the winds at 35, act 2)", Stravinsky who heard that "the singers are the main problem"—that the diction of the non-French-speaking cast

> affects not only colour but pitch and rhythm. . . . Of the two inexactnesses of the singers, in rhythm and intonation, the former is the more surprising. Not that exactness is all; but suppleness comes after, not before, fidelity to the written rhythmic values, and each of Debussy's distinctions does its bit. Yet the singers do not always observe them. For example, more often than not the duration of the upbeat, or first note of a phrase, is doubled. Thus, choosing at random, Pelléas's *"mais il y a longtemps"* (beginning of scene 2, act 3) is set to five sixteenths but sung to an eighth and four sixteenths.

It was Stravinsky who heard that the singers' "accents and mispronunciations . . . attract too much attention to the words," adding, "And what words! How could Debussy, the friend of Mallarmé, stomach Maeterlinck, let alone underline some of his most irritating mannerisms?" And it was Stravinsky who, after all this, exclaimed, "But enough. What beautiful things the score contains!"—only to have to add that "my impression of the musical whole is of a decline in effectiveness after the *'Hair'* scene," and that the idiom of the work, "like a drug, wears off with time"—which raised the question for him whether that idiom "is . . . a too confining one for an opera of this length", in whose later scenes "simplicity and restraint turn into limitation and constraint, beautiful monotony into just plain monotony."

And Craft's explanation of Libman's attack on the authenticity of the Stravinsky writing—that she appeared to be unaware of the actual procedure that had produced it—was confirmed by a reading of her book, *And Music at the Close*,[1] when it was published last autumn. Unlike Henahan's interview and his later article in the *Times*, it was written with obvious love—the love for Stravinsky himself and his wife which they had reciprocated, and affectionate understanding for Craft, whose personal problems and eccentricities had introduced burdensome complications into her work for Stravinsky. Moreover it was written by a person with good will and intelligence, but without the subtlety of mind and feeling of the extraordinary people she had been involved with—so that there must have been much that went on among them that she had been, in Craft's words, "not . . . aware of." Thus—in the matter I have been concerned with in this article—she reported that in New York in August 1967 she informed Craft of the commission from Fratelli Fabbri Editori in Milan for the 2000-word article under Stravinsky's by-line that would be the preface to Volume 9 of their *Storia della Musica*, and that later was included among the Stravinsky writings in the final Stravinsky-Craft volume under the title *Some Perspectives of a Contemporary*; and she added in parentheses that Craft, "in order to meet his [sic] deadline, dictated the text to me in two of the most expensive long-distance calls he ever made from Hollywood." For her this was an instance of Craft being the actual

[1] *And Music at the Close*. By LILLIAN LIBMAN. *Norton, $9.95;* Macmillan, £3.50.

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author of what appeared as Stravinsky's; and there appeared to be no awareness on her part that what Craft dictated to her from Hollywood was the accumulation of all he had heard Stravinsky say on the subject during the preceding twenty years, and that it probably included the very words of Stravinsky that by this time must have become fixed in Craft's mind. It wasn't necessary for Craft to invent a Stravinskyan style, as Libman contended he had done: he had in his mind, and could write down fluently, the actual words of Stravinsky and the actual way he had used them.

WHAT WAS FOR ME a convincing reply to Libman was contained in the novelist Paul Horgan's book, *Encounters with Stravinsky*,[2] written, like hers, with love, but in addition with a sensitivity of mind and feeling which had enabled him to experience in person the sharpness of mind and wit that Libman claimed was invented for Stravinsky's published writing by Craft. The book contains Horgan's letter to *The New Yorker*, in January 1972, about the assertion of its music critic, Winthrop Sargeant, that "those who knew Stravinsky know that he was fluent only in Russian and French, and that his numerous writings in English in recent years were the work of his amanuensis, Robert Craft . . . "—a letter in which Horgan wrote that "Stravinsky in his recorded dialogues (not 'writings') with Mr Craft always sounded like the Stravinsky I listened to time and again in direct English conversation," and said of this conversation that "I have never known conversational English more pungent than his, or more grammatically correct, precise (often devastatingly so) in vocabulary, and original in style, all within the frame of the natural syntax of the language."

And there was, after all, Stravinsky's statement in the letter that appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* in the summer of 1970, in reply to an article in which Boulez had been "charged with impugning the 'authenticity' of certain statements of my own" and had apparently " 'suggested' that my 'arch-disciple' [Craft] has put words into my mouth":

> . . . It would be strange indeed if we had *not* put words into, or helped to get them *out* of, each other's mouths: after all, we have been working together for 23 years. . . .

[2] *Encounters with Stravinsky*. By PAUL HORGAN. *Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, $7.95;* Bodley Head, £3.

Dog Days

Why should these days of torpid midsummer weather
when the air is out of breath
and the pale sun
cowers, defeated by haze,
in English become

Dog Days? I mope, drinking and doodling,
living a dog's life,
feeling glum
and wilted, wondering: what's
the dog done

moreover to generate doggerel or dog eat dog?
Dogs don't go to the dogs.
I'm raving, shunning
all work. Thank god my dog
whines for a run.

Outside, though we're hugged by the unchanging smog,
"the creature hath a purpose"
and she pauses, stunned
by the scent of a nearby rabbit.
The chase has begun.

Stephen Miller

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NOTES & TOPICS

The Continuing Story of

The Youthful Rebels

THERE WAS a comfortable theory, current about four years ago and surviving even today, that student unrest was a sort of self-limiting disease, like an obscure skin ailment which would disappear as soon as it had run its course. The theory had its frivolous aspects—there were middle-aged Conservatives who remembered their own horseplay and put the whole thing down to youthful exuberance—but it also had relatively serious proponents. One of them was Stephen Spender,[1] who visited various campuses in Germany, France, Britain and the United States at the height of student activism in 1968. Student revolutionaries were in a false position, he argued, because the more successful they were in disrupting the university system, the less they would have to do: they would be destroying their own base. Individual revolutionaries, presumably, would likewise be at a loss when they left university. In any case, they would eventually have to conform if they wanted to eat: that was not in Spender's argument, but it seemed an inevitable corollary.

What, in fact, does happen to ex-student radicals? Where are they now? We collected the names of some 65 people known to have been active in Britain in 1967 and 1968 and tried to trace their history since then. Our list was taken partly from the signatories to two manifestos, one that of the Radical Student Alliance, the other of the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation. To these we added a number of people we remembered ourselves from those times, some of whom helped us to extend the list. We drew a blank with 25. The other 40 came out like this:

Teaching	
in higher or further education	13
in primary or secondary schools	4
Research	2
Still students	4
In industry or commerce	
management	1
workers	2
Trade union officials	3
Journalism	5
Alternative Society	5
Suicide	1

NICHOLAS BAGNALL *was editor of "The Teacher" from 1961-1965. Since that time he has been Education Correspondent of the "Sunday Telegraph", where* EVELYN COX *(aged 26) is his colleague.*

At first sight this list seems to support the Spender thesis: there is a clear reluctance to leave the education system, 26 out of the 40 being still in it in one way or another. Radical students in 1968 saw the universities as representing "capitalist values" in a particularly subtle form, and themselves as potential slaves of the economic system: as students, they had unrivalled opportunities to attack at least one aspect of that system. In support of this view one could quote the manifesto *Towards a Revolutionary Student Movement*, printed for the conference in June 1968 which gave birth to the Revolutionary Socialist Students' Federation. What was needed, said the manifesto, was

> a resolute fight against the hold which the British ruling class exercises over universities and colleges and the authoritarian system whereby they maintain it.

But to confine one's attention to this aspect of the student movement is surely to misread what it is about. It was never primarily concerned with democratising the universities. To be sure, one can remember meeting students in 1968 and 1969 who plainly did not see beyond the immediate excitements of raiding the registrar's records or sleeping on the vice-chancellor's carpet; but these were not the serious radicals and they were not the leaders.

Many committed leaders saw student unrest as a chance to recruit more people to their own political causes. Thus the manifesto which we have just quoted went on to say: "The *revolutionary* character of the demand for student power will only be safeguarded if students reject the notion of higher education as a self-contained world of its own. Militant students must reach out to the potentially revolutionary forces in society as a whole." (It mentioned young workers on part-time or day release courses as a possible vital bridgehead in this respect.)

In short, these students regarded themselves as part of the "Proletarian" or working-class movement. Again, the classic confrontations began with outside causes: that at L.S.E. began in Central Africa, that at Essex began at Porton

[1] In *The Year of the Young Rebels* (1969).

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Sex, Unreason

DOTSON RADER:[1] *I'm trying to reach some sort of understanding of why the Left adopted certain tactics and why it's adopting certain tactics now. The period of 1968 and '69 is the pivotal year in terms of the New Left, because it's the years in which the non-pacifists left. I began in the student peace union and we all began as pacifists, as humanists and existentialists. The whole movement of my life and everyone I know in the Left has been a movement away from a pacific position to a more violent one, to the acceptance more and more of violent tactics. 1969 is when the Left began to go underground and began to break up in terms of wide, national organisational structures into affinity groups and began to respond very definitely to growing policy repression. . . . I believe in revolution and I support the idea of a revolution in this country. I'd like to see a revolution.*

ARNOLD BEICHMAN:[2] *What kind?*

RADER: *Let me just finish this one point. If you're—*

BEICHMAN: *You're so tantalizing.*

RADER: *If you're a writer, which I am, or if you're an organizer, which, say, Dellinger is, regardless of whether you're on the pacifist Left or you're on the Weathermen Left, the whole point of the thrust of your life is to create subversives. In other words, to subvert American values, subvert American institutions, and you do this through many ways. And the rhetoric used—Arnold Beichman's "nine big lies"—is a device, and a rather successful device, to break down trust built up between the people and their institutions. Now, I'm not, by saying that, admitting they're lies.*

BEICHMAN: *And what kind of revolution?*

RADER: *I think by revolution we all mean the seizure of state power.*

BEICHMAN: *You mean by election?*

RADER: *No, not by election.*

BEICHMAN: *By* coup d'état?

RADER: *No, I think by revolution in the streets, by the seizure of American institutions.*

BEICHMAN: *If you have people in the streets, milling around, they're going to be shot at by somebody.*

RADER: *I know that.*

BEICHMAN: *So, you want a violent revolution—that's what you're suggesting.*

RADER: *Personally, I would welcome a violent revolution because there's something in me personally that finds violence—*

WILLIAM BUCKLEY:[3] *You find it sexy.*

RADER: *I find it sexy, yes.*

BEICHMAN: *Whom would you be shooting at? You are in the streets. Presumably, you would have a sten gun.*

RADER: *Well, probably you, if you came walking down the street.*

BEICHMAN: *Well, I don't take it as a joke. I'm very serious. I mean, you know, I've had this happen before. I was shot at several times by revolutionaries and counter-revolutionaries, too, in Algeria, among other places, and in Vietnam. So, it's nothing particularly new. I'd just like to know why you'd be shooting at me.*

RADER: *I have difficulty responding to questions like that, because I would view it—*

BEICHMAN: *This is the reality of revolution.*

RADER: *Let me answer the question. I view it all very novelistically, almost voyeuristically—the whole thing. . . . Just from the experience of my life in this country, I don't think any more, believe any more, that you're going to bring about massive change in this country through democratic, electoral means.*

BEICHMAN: *Is there some revolution you particularly like which you think has worked out really well?*

RADER: *Outside of the Paris Commune, you mean? I know you put that down.*

BUCKLEY: *Well, of course, that didn't work out very well. They were all killed.*

RADER: *Well, failure has its charms.*

BUCKLEY: *Who?*

RADER: *Failure has its charms.*

BUCKLEY: *He didn't ask you about a charming revolution. He asked you about a successful revolution.*

BEICHMAN: *Like one that's worked out. Give me an idea, when you say revolution—do you like the Algerian revolution, the Cuban, the Russian, the Chinese? The Turks had a revolution.*

RADER: *I liked the Cuban revolution for three years.*

BUCKLEY: *So you're still talking about revolutions you* don't *like.*

RADER: *Yes, I like the Russian revolution until the rise of Stalin.*

BEICHMAN: *Well, is there something inevitable in these revolutions?*

RADER: *Then, I think, the Soviet Union became social fascist.*

BEICHMAN: *Is there any revolution that you've known which doesn't eventually go down? . . .*

BUCKLEY: *Can you tell us what it is that has been advanced by the whole sum of your labours and that of your colleagues, over the last seven or eight years, in terms of an understanding of the necessity for revolution or the likelihood of it?*

RADER: *Part of our belief is that the first thing that occurs before political change is cultural change. You have to change the consciousness of the people. I personally believe that you've got to change*

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[1] **Dotson Rader:** an S.D.S. leader in the Columbia University riots of 1968: author of *I Ain't Marchin' Any More, Government-Infected Meat & Other Summer Fun Things*; contributing editor of *Evergreen Review*.

[2] **Arnold Beichman:** author of *"The Other" State Department* (a study of U.S. policy at the UN), and *Nine Lies About America*.

[3] **William F. Buckley jr.:** editor of the *National Review* in New York and director of the "Firing Line" programme on National Educational Television, from the official transcript of which these excerpts are taken.

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& Revolution

people's sexual attitudes, people's attitudes toward the Church, toward education, toward business—
BEICHMAN: *Sex attitudes have changed fantastically. . . .*
RADER: *Well, what's the point?*
BEICHMAN: *The point I'm making is that you may have achieved a cultural revolution, which is quite possible in changing manners, modes, consciousness; but the political revolution is something which may escape the clutches of this cultural revolution, because it has no ideology. Just "revolution"? Which revolution?*
RADER: *You see, I think part of the thrust of the Left has been to encourage dropping out of the system by—you're not going to like this—the most sensitive and the most gifted, intellectually, of the young. That's why drugs, for example, are a device and sexual promiscuity and sexual deviancy are devices. Any device by which a person becomes an outlaw within his own country makes him, by definition, a rebel. Therefore, natural allies to a revolutionary movement, whether they're conscious of it or not, are women who undergo illegal abortions, are people on drugs, people who take drugs, or homosexuals—anyone who is, by definition, an outlaw.*
BUCKLEY: *Charles Manson would be a rebel by that formula, right?*
RADER: *Well, yes, if you take it to a ludicrous point.*
BUCKLEY: *Sort of an exemplary rebel.*
BEICHMAN: *And Bernadine Dohrn who enjoyed the fork going into a victim's stomach—"Wow, man!"—would be a rebel, too.*
BUCKLEY: *Or Sirhan Sirhan. Sirhan Sirhan would be a rebel.*
RADER: *Wait a minute. It's a serious point I'm making, so don't—*
BUCKLEY: *No, you said people who isolate themselves from the conventions of society. The conventions of society say you shouldn't shoot Bobby Kennedy.*
RADER: *That is not to say that you necessarily think what they do is good, but you—*
BUCKLEY: *But generically, they do foster the revolutionary spirit by pulling out.*
BEICHMAN: *But the politics of this is what I don't understand. Is it that you want to see, let's say, in the best sense of the word—a Communist society, an anarchism, you know, syndicalism? I don't quite understand the politics of the word "revolution." I understand the culture that you talk about. I don't understand the politics of it. What would be the power structure? Would it be a politburo? Would it be a dictatorship? Would George Meany be sitting, you know, in Elba some place?*

BUCKLEY: *He wants a constitution written by the Marquis de Sade—he's a revolutionary.*
BEICHMAN: *Yes, that's a very important revolution. You could have the Olympia Press sell it in all the bookstores and make fortunes for everybody.*
BUCKLEY: *Oh, no, no. You can't make fortunes. Sorry.*
RADER: *No, no.*
BUCKLEY: *No fortunes.*
BEICHMAN: *What do you do with the money?*
BUCKLEY: *What do you do with the money?*
RADER: *Burn it, I don't know.*
BEICHMAN: *What do you do with your profits?*
RADER: *You've asked me a question I have no answer to. What you're asking is what comes—*
BEICHMAN: *This is the most successful guest you've ever—It's the first time I've ever heard a guest on your programme say he has no answer.* [laughter] *This may be a historic moment.*
RADER: *What you're asking is what comes after the revolution. I don't know. . . . The difference between this generation and revolutions, say, of the 19th century, is we're not interested, fundamentally, in equality. We're fundamentally interested in justice, which means that we have a greater tolerance for ideas of liquidating a class and so on. And I think that comes from—*
BEICHMAN: *You're talking about murder. This is the way people get categorized—a class. Jews, Gypsies, and Catholics—you don't see people. You see Jews, Catholics, and Gypsies, and they march off, as you like to say in your book, to the gas chambers, quietly. . . . When you talk about the word "class," don't you see people? Is it that fixed that you can say, "You ought to be shot and* you *ought to live?" And who the hell are you to say so?*
RADER: *The whole thing of—*
BEICHMAN: *Why shouldn't I shoot you, in that case?*
RADER: *The whole ability to function as a revolutionary, which I'm not, depends upon the ability to depersonalize your enemy.*
BUCKLEY: *People.*
RADER: *Exactly. If you personalize your enemy, you can't act.*
BUCKLEY: *That's right. As Jerry Rubin said, you've got to be prepared to shoot your mother.*
RADER: *That's right.*
BUCKLEY: *That's pretty straightforward.*

BEICHMAN: *What I find difficult about you, Dotson, is you keep saying "I'm not a revolutionary," but you're busy explaining it in very understanding, very charming and elegant prose, and I keep thinking about the boys who were always busy understanding Hitler—"Of course, he's an uncouth barbarian. I'm not a Nazi, but you do have to understand the Jews owned all the department stores in Berlin."*
RADER: *I support the idea of revolution. If revolution came, I would support it. I haven't the—*
BEICHMAN: How *would you support it?*
RADER: *I know enough about myself—*
BEICHMAN: *By running the Mimeograph machine or running the machine-gun?*
RADER: *—to know that I don't have the physical courage to be willing to die. I don't want to die and I'm not willing to die with the revolution or anything else. I mean, I know enough about myself. I have no*

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Down. The issues became domestic or domesticated, as they invariably did, only because these were the best means by which the leaders could get support from students as a whole. The same phenomenon can perhaps be seen in the National Union of Students during its steady move to the Left, with long conference debates on Ulster and an increasing interest in the affairs of the Trades Union Congress. Popular support, meanwhile, comes through campaigns for Increased Grants and Student Union Autonomy.

WHY, MEANWHILE, ARE so many ex-radicals still in the education system? Digby Jacks, Communist N.U.S. president, says: "The idea that ex-radicals stay in education because they don't want to leave the ivory tower is nonsense. . . ." It's not that the ivory tower is not worth storming, but simply that it is not here that the real enemy is to be found. It would be absurd, therefore, to imagine that you join (or rejoin) an educational institution purposely to carry on the work of subversion.

The position of those still in education was well summed up for us by an ex-*R.S.S.F.* girl now lecturing in a technical college: "The idea of subversion would never occur to me. I'm still sympathetic to the Trotskyist movement, and if the Revolution comes (and it won't be tomorrow) I know which side of the barricades I'll be on. But most of my students are self-satisfied, *petit-bourgeois* clerks and administrators. If I can just make them a little more compassionate. . . . One thing I couldn't do would be to sell myself completely to a capitalist organisation."

One of the remarkable things about our list of 40 is how few seem to have "sold" themselves in this way, unless you regard working for the education system as a sell-out. Teaching is a common choice for negative reasons rather than positive ones. It demands fewer "compromises with capitalism". You can dress more or less how you like if you lecture in a technical college; you can earn a reasonable salary outside the marketplace; and you have more time than most people do for outside political activity.

Ed Straw, former president of Manchester students' union who helped to escalate a prolonged sit-in there in 1970 in the cause of "freedom of speech", was studying business administration at Manchester Business School when we talked to him. He questioned whether what he was doing amounted to "selling out" any more than teaching did. Whether in teaching or in industry, "there are pressures which persuade you to keep your mouth shut. You might lose your job, get married, have children. You have to act in a more covert way. No, I'm not talking about subversion. If you attempt subversion, people are going to find out and you're for the boot. . . ."

In either case, says Straw, you're part of the Capitalist System: " 'Keeping pure' and attacking society from outside it is a load of rubbish." And in either case there are opportunities for putting forward radical views. But those who attempt, or seem to be attempting, open subversion risk the fate of Dr David Craig of Lancaster University, removed from his course not so much because of a somewhat harmless-looking syllabus in modern English studies, but because of the innate conservatism of senior dons. (The Craig affair had a profound effect on many radical lecturers.)

Terry Lacey, founder of the Radical Student Alliance, was lecturing at Manchester University. "If you're a teacher and you have views like mine you're certainly not so stupid as to bend the syllabus", he said. "But you can change it. I've managed to change mine." He still believes, as he did in 1967, that confrontation with university authorities should never be an end in itself, nor has he abandoned his belief that Students should combine with Workers in Confrontation with Capitalism.

That, of course, was always the aim of the good Marxist. Differences of view about how this aim should be achieved were only one of the reasons why the student movement of the late 1960s lost impetus. Vice-chancellors, whom one remembers having laughed at for their initial vacillation and hesitancy in the face of the

continued from the previous page

physical courage at all, and what draws me into situations of political violence is not courage but a kind of psychological need in me to involve myself that way.

BEICHMAN: *Why don't you take up flying airplanes?*

RADER: *I also know that I am part of a privileged class that would be liquidated. I mean, they may get you first, but they'd get me next. And I know that, absolutely. . . . It doesn't matter to me because I want revolution to come. And the reasons for it are very complex.*

BEICHMAN: *What happens afterward doesn't matter?*

RADER: *Well, I don't think I'll be around to see, you know. . . .*

BEICHMAN: *You don't know what it's going to be. You don't know where it's going to lead. . . .*

RADER: *You're continually trying to find rationality behind what people do politically—particularly, what the Left does politically. The thrust of the Left is against reason. It's anti-rational. That's why it's anarchistic and nihilistic. It's anti-rational. . . . The motivation behind, say, the desire for these abstractions doesn't come intellectually. It comes emotionally. It comes out of the gut. And that's why attacking the Left for this and attacking the Left for that is a very rational argument, but it doesn't work.*

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onslaught, eventually became much cleverer at defusing situations. They retreated behind a complex of staff-student committees, or they waited for the radicals to do something outrageous enough to detach themselves from the general mass of student opinion.

Meanwhile it was understandable that the New Left should begin to over-reach itself. In 1968 many students really did believe that they were at the dawn of a new era. There were the *événements* in France, the Czech uprising, Black Power in the States, the anti-Viet Nam movement, Angola, a renewed interest in Liberation Movements everywhere; the Third World was seemingly at their feet. Activism was a full-time business for dedicated radicals. They read, they met and theorised; they visited each other's universities at the week-ends. The L.S.E. pub in Portugal Street was crowded with students from Hull, Manchester, and Essex. No one much thought that all this excitement need ever come to an end.

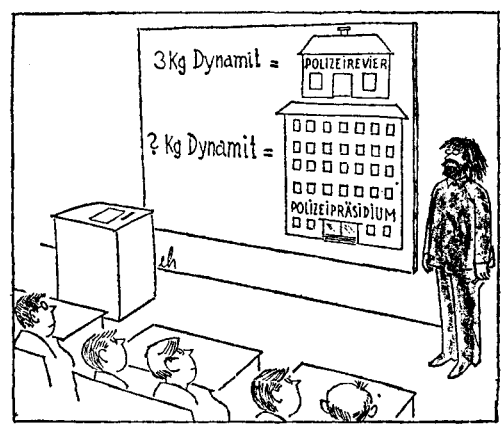
"Everywhere", said an *R.S.S.F.* manifesto, "students have been on the march, revealing their potential as a revolutionary force in their own right. . . . The upheaval in France has shown that revolution today is not a Utopia." In such a mood, taking over a student union meeting in a British university promised to be a walkover. It was not.

FOUR YEARS LATER, with their university careers behind them, the Old Left find it easier to accommodate themselves to the situation than the New. The Old Left never thought the Workers' Revolution was round the corner, and they could afford to be fairly cynical when the workers regarded students as being outside the brotherhood. It was no surprise to them when, in 1970, a committee of the T.U.C. rebuffed an N.U.S. approach to the Congress on the ground that students were not employees, and therefore could not join.

Communists who helped in their student days to radicalise the leadership of the N.U.S. can go on quietly seeking what one of them (now a polytechnic lecturer) calls "a practical relationship with the general working-class movement." He goes on to explain: "If I'm subverting anyone it's not my students. One can perhaps see a 0·01 per cent move to the Left among students. The movement is among fellow-members of staff. . . ." Here the aim is to get lecturers to realise that they are members of a trade union rather than of a professional organisation. The Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions is affiliated to the T.U.C., and the progressive rump of the Association is getting stronger. Its organ of propaganda, *Further Left,* held a meeting at the last annual conference of the A.T.T.I. which spent most of its time discussing, not lecturers' pay and conditions (though these were certainly on the agenda), but the Industrial Relations Act and the importance of making common cause with local trades councils. Old-Leftists regard their part-time activities as more important than their jobs. They can go on working for the Party; or, if outside the Party, they can be content to remain what Ed Straw calls "attitude-revolutionaries."

For the Trotskyites of the New Left—and it was they who provided most of the impetus for the *R.S.S.F.*—accommodating to the world outside university has plainly been rather more difficult. Their aim may have been the same as that of their fellow-Marxists of the Old Left; but their tactics were different. They did not believe in working through existing democratic channels. They regarded the tactics of the Communists as hypocritical; they were impatient to get the revolution going, and 1968 was a year in which it looked as though impatience might pay off. Then, Instant Confrontation seemed a reasonable formula. But confronting authority when you are a student is one thing: doing the same thing as a lecturer—as someone who is himself operating the hated System—is another. It invites dismissal. So the Samson-like task of bringing the academic hierarchy tumbling about one's ears may be reduced to less ambitious pioneering work such as ensuring "pupils' rights" to wear their hair the way they want it and attacking other marginal symbols of the authoritarian system.

It is important to stress that Trotskyism in its varying shades has not by any means lost its charm for either radical students or ex-students. The first Christians thought that Our Lord would be making a personal comeback in their own lifetimes: they did not lose faith when the



THE NEW MATHEMATICS

". . . and how much dynamite will it take to blow up Police Headquarters? . . ."

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Messiah failed to reappear. Instead, they went underground.

THE LOGICAL DILEMMA facing the extreme Left remains. One of the most interesting of the vintage radicals of the late '60s is Dick Atkinson, who for two years was an unofficial lecturer at Birmingham University. His rejection in 1970 by the University's Academic Appointments Committee raised a storm among Left-wing dons; two years before that he had played a big part in a Birmingham sit-in. At the London School of Economics he had walked out of a negotiating committee on staff-student relations. Now he has decided to take what seems to him the only logical course and to leave the campus altogether, believing that he can further his causes better outside it.

He insists that a true revolutionary cannot stay inside the system: either he must get out, or he must inevitably move further to the Right. Inside, he can only be a reformist, and "reformism only makes genuine changes more difficult." Atkinson repudiates the Marxist view that the proletariat should be the agent of change; the old idea that the struggle is between labour and capital, and that all the revolutionary has to do is to radicalise the working classes, has been overtaken, since we no longer have a simple capitalist society. What we have is a highly complex industrial-technological society centralised and controlled to a large degree by a benevo-

The Great American Fade-Out

Chicago

IT WASN'T VERY LONG AGO *that a job recruiter couldn't show his face on a college campus without being suspected of war crimes. If he was connected with the manufacture of anything less benign than marshmallows, he might have to flee, with the cries of "Murderer" in his ears. That was when the peace movement had little difficulty mobilizing hundreds of thousands of people, most of them young, to gather at the Pentagon and protest the war.*

Everywhere you looked, they were preaching and marching, organizing and picketing. Weekend TV news shows were taken up almost entirely with the latest doings of peace groups in cities and on campuses across the country. A kid who didn't burn his draft card at least once was considered a fink.

When President Johnson ignored their views and sent more troops to Vietnam, they formed behind Sen. Eugene McCarthy and convinced Mr Johnson that he should retire to Texas. Then when the Democrats insisted on slating Hubert Humphrey, they took to the streets of Chicago and the resulting chaos tipped the balance of that election.

THE KEY WORD *throughout that period was "immoral." The war was immoral. Those who encouraged it were immoral. Those who profited from it were immoral.*

Young orators uttered millions of words about how they were not going to go across the sea to shoot at innocent Asiatic women and children. Those who took off for Canada were considered to be men of high moral principle, rather than draft dodgers.

Most people agreed that this was no ordinary generation, or generations, of young people. They were hailed for being aware, unselfish, idealistic, and flatly against the waste of human life. Make love, not war, was their slogan.

If a politician thought he could send them to shoot at strangers, he was a war criminal. If a politician thought as they did, he was their hero. That's the way it was a short time ago. Now the question is: Where did everybody go?

THE CAMPUS *is quiet. Football is again a more popular sport than seizing the dean's office. College presidents don't need a hot line to the National Guard.*

The organized peace movement has shrunk to almost nothing. Only 3,000 protesters showed up in Miami Beach for the Republican convention, and many of them were complaining about issues other than war.

To have your conscience tweaked, you have to wait for Jane Fonda to hit town. The rest of the peace movement's leaders can't even get anyone to arrest them.

AND THE MOST SURPRISING *development of all is the political popularity poll, for the polls showed that the majority of the nation's young voters preferred President Nixon to Sen. McGovern.*

Now that Mr Nixon has pulled most of our ground troops out—and has left the killing up to our bombers—nobody chants anything like "Hey, Hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" Stories about the number of air strikes we flew yesterday don't offend their morality so much as stories about the size of the monthly draft call.

Many of them even took an interest in other aspects of the campaign, such as wondering if McGovern would be a competent administrator. In 1968, none of them cared if Sen. McCarthy had enough administrative skill to pick out a necktie in the morning.

I hope nobody takes this to mean that I am being critical of these young people for exercising their right of free choice. Not at all.

In fact, I'm more likely to trust people under 30. They really aren't that different after all. And now Dow Chemical Co.'s recruiters can probably hire all the bright young men it needs.

Mike Royko

in the CHICAGO DAILY NEWS *reprinted in* THE STANFORD UNIVERSITY DAILY

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lent State bureaucracy of which the working class is itself a part. You may try to democratise the universities as hard as you like, but you are still helping to operate a basically authoritarian machine, even helping to make it more efficient.

So the philosophy of what one might call the *New* New Left involves a search for alternative agents of great change: for great change, nothing less, there must be. If you are an academic, you teach in the city, with the anti-university or the free school; if you are not an academic, there are other ways of building a new society and living in the old as well. You can work for Women's Lib, or Gay Lib, or Black Power; for claimants' unions, for squatters' rights.

IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN that our list underestimates the proportion of ex-student radicals who have gone into the Alternative Society. Nor, of course, does it indicate how many are working for the Alternative Society in their free time, whether in legal advice, community action, or merely contributing to the so-called underground Press. If you go to the Peace Centre near the Bull Ring in Birmingham, which sells Alternative literature and chunky personal accessories and acts as a meeting-place and miniature conference centre, you can find an amazing variety of activities which contrast oddly—and refreshingly—with the speculator's concrete of this ravaged city: information can be got about P.N.P. (*People Not Psychiatry*), the Beaumont Society (friendship and understanding for those with gender problems), the Free University, the Housing Advisory Service, lectures on Marx or Workers Control, the visit of Satish Kumar. . . .

David Fernbach, one of the group of 1968 student activists at the L.S.E., still lives in his old flat above a dry-cleaners in Hampstead, getting by on about £12 a week from writing: after he left L.S.E. he contributed to *Seven Days, Cream,* and the *New Left Review,* is now helping with the Penguin Marx Library and writing a book on the new radical social movements of the past decade. And working for Gay Lib.

His political views have changed more than his life-style. He looks back on his involvement in the student movement as a good thing, "but it was limited and distorted in many ways. The most positive side of it for me was the Viet Nam Solidarity Campaign, and the struggle over L.S.E.'s investments in South Africa and Rhodesia. The weakness of the student movement was that it could never answer the question: 'What are we in it for?' Students aren't an oppressed group—they're an élite.

"I don't think revolutions are made by groups finding a new philosophy—they're made by people acting out their own interests. I never belonged to any of the groups that saw themselves as the embryonic revolutionary vanguard—they were too arrogant."

There, surely, speaks the authentic voice of the revolutionary drop-out. It's a fair guess there will be more of them. "We can only change attitudes to things like sex gradually by a series of small gains"—Fernbach again. "We'd have to go on working like that even after the Revolution."

Disillusionment? We wouldn't call it that. The true believer is, as we have said, still there: his style has changed. And if the revolution of 1968 may be said to have failed, there is little doubt that the influence of the revolutionaries is still with us. It is significant that the 1967 manifesto of the Radical Student Alliance, which seemed to many people at the time like dangerous, heady stuff, reads now as quite commonplace. It might be thrown out by a National Union of Students conference, if it appeared as a resolution, on the ground that it was too moderate. Terry Lacey, now married with a small child and living in a Manchester suburb, points out: "sitting in and demonstrating has become almost a part of the British way of life since 1967, part of the democratic machinery, with consultations with the police before you start marching." Then again, instead of thinking about the publicised failures—Craig, Atkinson, Chris Searle of *Stepney Words*—we should perhaps be thinking of the smaller, unpublicised successes here and there, Lacey says: bits of new syllabus coming in as a new generation of lecturers and professors replaces the old.

It seems strange on first sight that, with so many radicals in the education service, so few appear to have gone into the established social services: we could trace no prominent activist who had gone into this field. Nevertheless, the gradual Leftward trend of the student movement since the '60s, away from formerly-accepted conventions and ideas, has kindled gradual changes in the social services, though we may owe this to the sympathisers of the revolution rather than to its leaders. For instance, the metamorphosis of the Young Volunteer Force Foundation from an organisation recruiting young people for welfare work to one involved in community action is due largely to the influence of the young graduates who joined the staff around 1969. Even in the local authority social services departments it is clear that the recent graduates make quite a different breed of social worker.

To return to the metaphor, the infection (if you want to call it that) is more than skin deep. It may be latent, but it's certainly still in the bloodstream.

Nicholas Bagnall, Evelyn Cox

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The Morning after the Revolution

By Donald Davie

TO CONSIDER poetry along with the other arts in the 20th century is not so different as it ought to be from considering modern poetry, as such, in isolation. At first sight, it is to many of us depressingly familiar: it is the sort of thing we have to do whenever we teach a course in "Modern Poetry." The unspoken or sometimes explicit assumption in the minds of teacher and student alike, when they present themselves for such a course, is that the present century has seen revolutionary innovations in the practice of this ancient art, and that these innovations, the reasons for them and the consequences of them, are precisely what are to be studied. Indeed, one must go further: because the literary arts, unlike the other arts, are tied into our systems of higher education as a central thread of our studies, a lot of us try to explore the whole matter of 20th-century innovations in the arts by way of innovations in the one art of literature.

It is open to question whether literature loses or gains by thus being, as it were, the educationist's favourite child among the arts. One very parlous danger which arises is that readers may forget how literature, like all the arts, exists in the first place for delight; that one is meant to enjoy it, not to work at it so as to pass examinations; that if literature is instructive (as it is), it is instructive only in the second place—in the first place it is meant to delight, as music is, or painting.

But that isn't my concern—which is, rather, to ask how serviceable literature is, as a way into the whole realm of artistic experiment and innovation in the present century. And I am going to declare roundly that it isn't very serviceable. On the contrary, one of the advantages of looking at poetry in the context of all the Arts is that it brings home to us how much literature, or more narrowly poetry, is the odd-one-out among the arts in the present century—how it has built into it, in a way that is not true of the other arts, a principle of conservatism; how, because of the artistic medium that poetry employs, the scope for fruitful experiment in this art is, and has been shown to be, far narrower than in the arts of painting and music, of the dance, of architecture, of sculpture. If this is true, then, despite our educationists' assumptions to the contrary, a study of 20th-century poetry is not a good way into the study of the 20th-century arts in general—for it does not make one free of the exciting but also frightening region of new-found freedom which other arts in the present century seem to have enjoyed, or been daunted by.

BUT LET ME NOT SEEM to assert, or to deny, too much. As a matter simply of historical record, it would be wrong to maintain that poetry has persisted unaffected by the ferment of artistic ideas and activities that has seethed for the past century, especially in the United States and in Europe. It is a matter of historical record that nearly all the most serious and talented poets of this period have been aware of, and excited by, the activities of serious and talented practitioners in the other arts. What we call "the modern movement" in the arts was something that poets were aware of, and something which they conceived themselves to be participating in. And in fact we must go further. If, as I shall maintain, the poet in our era has had far less scope for free experiment than the sculptor has had, the painter, the musician, the architect, this is not something that the poets themselves seem to have recognised at all clearly or constantly. They talk of themselves, and of what they are doing, as if their art were capable of revolutionising itself as totally as painting was revolutionised by Impressionism, Post-Impres-

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sionism, Cubism, Action-painting; as if the art of poetry in our time were capable of being transformed as utterly as the discoveries of reinforced and pre-stressed concrete have revolutionised the art of architecture. The poets, or many of them, have shared the same sense of unlimited possibilities before them as their friends, the painters, sculptors, architects, and musicians. They have experienced the same conviction of liberation, the same eagerness and access of creative energy.

In large part, this was a delusion—but it was a beneficent delusion; being thus deluded, poets could find the energy to compose works as heroically large in conception as, for example, Ezra Pound's *Cantos* or Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. Our poets have mostly lived, and for the most part we still live, in a world of seemingly boundless possibilities. The poets talk about themselves, and for the most part we still talk of them, in terms of drastic reversals, unheard-of new departures, wholly new territories to be opened up and colonised. It has been said perceptively that the arts have lived for the last century in a state of "perpetual revolution." And although I do not believe that the art of poetry has in fact participated in this state nearly so much as the other arts, yet we habitually talk as if it had; and our talk is apocalyptic and revolutionary in feeling.

WHY IS THIS TALK wide of the mark? In the first place, because poetry, of all the arts, has been least affected, or least *can* be affected, by discoveries in technology. The physical and mechanical operations involved in the composing of poems are of a hair-raising simplicity—pen, ink, and paper. The ball-point pen eliminated the need for ink. Contrast the cumbrousness and intricacy of the operations involved in getting an architect's conception into a physically extant architectural composition; or a sculptor's conception extant as a bronze casting. To be sure, we can get into curious metaphysical problems here! Is a piece of music composed once it is in the form of a written score, though it has never been performed? Is the sculptor's bronze "composed" as soon as it is in the form of a plaster maquette? Is the architect's building "composed" although it has never left his drawingboard?

Almost certainly each of the arts differs from the others in this respect, and doubtless it comes back to a question of psychology, to the point in the process of composition at which the artist feels satisfied that he has rid himself of the burden of his own conception, has cut the umbilical cord

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between himself and it, has cast it free of himself into the public domain. But I should be surprised if for the poet the avenue from conception to execution were not shorter and more direct than in any of the other arts. Much as it matters to the poet to see himself in print, it must matter less than for the musician to have his works performed, or for the architect to have his works lived in. A scrawl on a single piece of paper—the poet's product can be as simple as that, and deeply satisfying in that form. To speak for myself, I treasure this very feelingly; my art is in this sense the most inviolable—I may make a poem in my head and carry it about with me in that form, for years, if need be; even denying me pen and paper does not stop me. And I pity the architect, or (to take a case nearer home) the playwright, that the practice of their arts is so dependent on an accumulation of materials. The process of poetic composition is mechanically so simple that there is no point where technology can enter its wedge.

IT MAY BE OBJECTED that I am missing the point. Very well, you may say, I am showing how poetry in the act of being composed need not take account of modern technology. It *need* not take account of it. But what of the poet who sees that technology as a challenge, who wants to take advantage of it? Is there no way in which he can adapt his process of composition to take advantage of technical resources, as the composer of music adapts his way of composing so as to profit from electronics?

I can think of only two such adaptations open to the poet, neither of them at all so far-reaching as the musician's adaptation to take account of electronic music. They are composing on the typewriter; and composing on the tape-recorder. The first is undoubtedly important. Composing at the typewriter *feels* quite different from composing with pen and ink. And the product is different also. There is an eloquent and hard-headed acknowledgement of this in one of the more recent documents that have appeared as heralds of a new dawn in Anglo-American Poetry, Charles Olson's "Projective Verse." And Olson is undoubtedly right, in so far as several generations of critics have been unaccountably obtuse about the effects they call "merely typographical" in the poetry of Cummings, the Cantos of Pound, and the poems of William Carlos Williams.

These effects should, I think, be categorised not just as a variant of "free verse," but as *typewritten* verse: genuinely a new thing, now being widely practised in the U.S. by many serious writers who work under Charles Olson's or Williams' influence. On the other hand, that

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the judgment "merely typographical" should have seemed conclusive for so long, and still seems conclusive to so many readers, shows how far we students of poetry are from accepting what I think is taken for granted in other modern arts—the fact that a new technology can decisively transform an art which has recourse to it. As for composing directly on to the tape-recorder, this I understand is currently the practice of Allen Ginsberg and a few others. The effects attained by this means seem much less genuinely novel than the effects attained by the typewriter. It has yet to be shown that composition on to tape-recorder is significantly different from composition by way of sustained improvisation, against the clock, which was quite common practice 150 years ago in the heyday of the Romantic Movement in Europe. The effect it is likely to have, as I would guess, and has had already, thanks to some of the poems of Ginsberg himself, is to re-introduce styles and effects long discredited, Shelleyan or Coleridgean styles of writing—this, rather than the inauguration of the unprecedented.

ONE MAY ALSO THINK that it is incongruous for poetry composed in either of these ways to have as its ultimate objective the printed page. The logical end-state for a poem composed on to the tape-recorder is not the printed page, but the tape itself or else the phonograph disc. (It is not altogether foolish to think that this is as true of some of Shelley's poems as of Allen Ginsberg's.) For the poem composed on the typewriter, on the other hand, the logical end-state is not a pattern of sounds on the air but a pattern of marks on a white sheet. To this extent, the printed page is still a valid objective for this kind of poetry. But the page of print, in order to do justice to the thoroughly typewritten poem, has itself to be transformed—as we see very clearly when we turn the printed pages of a book of poems by Cummings or Williams or Charles Olson, or of the *Rockdrill Cantos* of Pound, especially in the very beautiful first Italian printing of those late cantos. From the hands of a truly sensitive and devoted compositor, the page emerges as itself a harmonious composition of printed block and spaces; and accordingly the operation which we as "readers" are required to perform on a page of Cummings' poems or a page of Pound's Canto 90 is something radically different from what we normally understand as "reading." It seems to have nearly as much to do with the operation we perform when we stand before an abstract painting.

Thus we may almost say that what we are confronted with in these cases is a work of art produced in collaboration between the poet on the one hand, the printer on the other. Accordingly, we now have an international movement of "concrete poetry" or *poésie concrète*, of which one of the seminal centres seems to be Brazil. This is a sort of poetry (if we continue to call it that) to which the look of the words on the printed page is at least as important as their meanings in conjunction. I must confess that I have seen no specimen of this work worth much more than its value as a curiosity, and precious little even of that. But if the practice is uninteresting (except in the case of non-doctrinaire practitioners like Cummings and Pound, who stumbled upon it), concrete poetry has a very interesting body of theory to appeal to—particularly in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and other writings by Herbert Marshall McLuhan, For McLuhan argues that the predominance over the last five centuries of the solidly printed page as a medium of communication has conditioned us to think in linear terms, terms increasingly and dangerously inappropriate to the electronic age we live in, in which we need more and more to perceive "in field" rather than in series.

AT THIS POINT, I am dealing no longer with processes of composition, but with processes of transmission. And here we cannot fail to be struck more forcibly than ever by the extent to which poetry is today out of step with the other arts. In painting, the perfection of colour-photography and colour-reproduction have indeed revolutionised the process of transmitting art to the widest public; and indubitably the painter's knowledge of these improved means of transmitting his product influences him in the art of composition. Similarly, in music, the discovery and perfection of the techniques of recording and reproducing sounds have genuinely revolutionised the means of transmitting the art-product, and so to some degree the art itself. But if we look in the literary arts for the technological revolution corresponding to these in the other arts, we have to go back to the invention of printing more than 500 years ago!

If we take the force of this discrepancy of half a millennium between the historical experience of poetry and of the other arts, in this matter of the techniques of transmission, we cannot help but be dismayed. For it soon appears that poetry in the present era is at a frightening disadvantage compared with other arts. André Malraux has pointed out that the recent technological advances made in reproducing and transmitting the arts have created what he calls "the imaginary museum" or "the museum without walls." What this means in fact is that the vocabularies of painting and music, sculpture, architecture and the

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dance—vocabularies that were always *potentially* international, are now *effectively* so. And this points up quite glaringly the fact that the vocabulary of the art of poetry has not been, is not now, and can never be, an *international* vocabulary.

All the other arts nowadays release us from the prisons we were born in; but poetry forces us back inside the iron cage of being of a certain race speaking a certain language. The art of poetry imprisons, whereas all the other arts liberate. And let poets writhe and wrestle as they may, let them write a polyglot poetry as Ezra Pound did, let them explore the possibility of bizarre conjunctions and juxtapositions (as all of them do, undoubtedly in response to the imaginary museum), let them exert themselves as never before to the problems of translation (as they do, and rightly, and most fruitfully)—still this condition of poetry is inescapable. Every poem is written in some one of the languages of men, and is therefore insignificant to the vast majority of the world's inhabitants to whom that language is unknown. To be sure, we who write in English are luckier than any others, for our tongue stands a better chance of becoming an effective international tongue. But in fact, we are for the most part as unaware of our relative good fortune as of our absolute deprivation—we seldom notice, for instance, that many of the best poems of emergent Africa are being written in our language, and using our language in ways that to us are strange and maybe fruitful.

However that may be, can it be denied that poetry is necessarily, for good and ill, the most conservative of the the arts at the present time? The most conservative, since it forces us back inside the national or ethnic, at any rate inside the linguistic, frontiers, which the other arts, true cosmopolitans, leap over?

AND ALL THIS WHILE I have been rehearsing only one of the reasons for thinking poetry a conservative art. I have been arguing that this one of the arts can be, and to a great extent *has* to be, immune from the technological changes that have wrought revolutions in the other arts. But it is immune also from other changes. I have confessed my pity for the architect and the playwright (and I could have added painter, sculptor, and musician also), because the practice of their arts required, by contrast with poetry, such an accumulation of bulky and often expensive materials. I could have gone on to suggest (and now do) that by the same token the practice of these arts depends upon the co-operation and the goodwill of other people. Not so the poet. He needs no impresario, no orchestra, no concert-hall; no director, no stage-manager, no actors and stage-hands, no theatre; no dealer and no gallery; no blacksmith, no quarryman, no foundryman, no studio; no masons, no carpenters, no plumbers, no electricians, no contractors and sub-contractors, no building-site. It is not even certain that the poet needs a publisher. It is certain that he does *not* need a critic! He is his own man, all along the line—sublimely independent not only of physical materials but also of human colleagues and subordinates and instrumentalists.

And so this art can be practised, as none of the others can, in almost total immunity from capital on the one hand, and the labour-force on the other. Patrons, public dignitaries, committee-members, financiers, politicians, benefactors, sponsors, middlemen of all kinds—these people, whom other artists have to cajole and coax and flatter, or else bully and tyrannise—they have next to nothing to do with the practice of poetry, except in the extreme political situations of the police-states. And so, far more than any other artist, the poet can be immune not only to technological change but to social and economic and political change also. The particular disposition and development of social, political, and economic forces that characterise the 20th century—these, no less than the disposition and development of technological resources, have no necessary or immediate connection with the poet's operations. Unless he is the citizen of an unhappy country, the poet need pay no attention to these matters.

He *need* not. But of course, as with technology, the poet *may* take note of these realms of action and may choose to act in them, to act in them not in his capacity as citizen but as poet. And in fact when he does choose to act, for instance politically, the poet's actions are far less equivocal than those of other artists—far less equivocal, therefore far more immediately influential, and far more perilous to himself. It is not altogether easy to make a political painting or a political sculpture (without, that is, betraying the artistic principles of those arts); it is next to impossible, I suppose, to compose a political symphony or to build a political house. With poems, it is quite different; indeed, it is almost impossible to write a poem that does *not* have political implications of some kind, however tenuous or remote.

AND YET IT IS NOT the content of the poems that I have chiefly in mind. I prefer to think still of, on the one hand, composition of poems, on the other hand, their transmission. And certainly here in modern times there is wide scope for the poet to relate his operations to mass movements in society. One example surely is the practice of

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Russian poets in recent years of delivering their poems in person to a mass-audience. Another is the setting of one's poems to a tune, singing them, and recording them. Yet here too, we notice, these are not genuine innovations but rather rediscoveries of very ancient ways of communicating that were forgotten through the centuries when the printed page enjoyed supreme status. And in fact, if one thinks of the peculiarly modern mass-media such as radio and T.V., one is surely struck once again by how little they have to give the poet, and how little he has to give to them.

Thus I end where I began—with the stubborn and apparently ineradicable conservatism of poetry among the arts at the present day. And for the most part I am pleased and grateful that my art is the conservative art; that there cannot be abstract poetry; that there cannot be action-poetry as there is Action-painting. (Either no poetry is action-poetry, or all poetry is.) Poetry cannot live in a state of perpetual revolution, even though it goes through the motions of doing so. And I am glad of that too; because a state of perpetual revolution seems to me an unhealthy and unnatural state for culture to be in.

Cat, Tib, Prop and Mart

By Gavin Ewart

WHO WANTS TRANSLATIONS? Not the Latin scholars who can read the original. Not the schoolboys who can get what they want from Loeb (except for the obscene passages) in a literal prose version. The common reader, then—or, more specifically, the common reader of poetry; and all that he can hope for, if he has no Latin, is an individual flavour.

Latin verse is strongly formal, limited not only by line-length but also by the actual quantities within the lines (feet that are spondees, trochees, dactyls and so on). Translations into English often try to match the form by using rhyming stanzas; this is very difficult to do because of the compactness of Latin. The English version, as a result, is usually grossly expanded or phrases are left out. There are other ways. Louis and Celia Zukovsky have translated Catullus using word-sound only (*amorem*=ah more aim), which literally makes nonsense of the poems. I have myself translated odes by Horace, preserving the exact Latin word-order and dispensing as far as possible with the definite article. This emphasises the strangeness of the Latin poem and gives a sort of Early Auden effect; but it also makes the meaning harder to follow.

Myers and Ormsby[1] are devotees of rhyme and give Catullus an up-to-date urban trans-atlantic zest. See No. 56:

Oh Cato, here's a funny thing
To make you laugh until you're sick,
And have you howl just like a hick.
It's more absurd than anything:
I caught this young shit in the grass
Screwing his girl, and ran my prick,
Just like a spear, right up his arse.

Some of this reads like the dialogue of a Kingsley Amis novel. Some of the text has dropped out. But it has the right hardness and scurrility, the obscenity isn't shirked, and the rhymes work well. The Loeb version, first printed 1913 and still unaltered in 1968, funks it entirely and translates the whole poem: "O Cato, what an absurdly funny thing, worthy for you to hear and laugh at! Laugh, as much as you love Catullus, Cato. The thing is too absurd and funny . . .", the last three lines being represented by three dots, as too "unmentionable" for words.

Catullus' poems are of three kinds: bagatelles in varied iambic metres (1–60), long poems in hexameters (61–68), epigrams in elegiac couplets (69–116). In general, with their fags, creeps, baby girls, honeys, sugars and pricks, Myers and Ormsby do quite well with the short ones. Their use of rhyme doesn't lead to too much distortion —it is almost bound to lead to some—and only very rarely is the sense obscure. This happens, for example, in No. 59. "The sloppy slave in charge gives her her lumps" sounds like VD, but in fact means that he beats her (*ab semiraso tunderetur ustore*).

For the longer, more learned hexameter poems, they use rhymed couplets; and they use them well. The result is pretty smooth and makes the poems accessible, though the passionate verse written to Lesbia and the sexy sophistication of

[1] *Catullus: The Complete Poems for Modern Readers.* Translated by RENEY MYERS and ROBERT J. ORMSBY. Allen & Unwin, £3.00, paper 65p.

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the epigrams are what we value in Catullus nowadays. The whole book, using the idioms of modern America, does give an idea of what the young man from Verona was on about. It is, as it claims, "complete and unexpurgated." Those hypothetical "modern readers" should get quite a lot from it.

Tibullus[2] is not so well-known as the other Augustans. His poems are longer, less passionate, all in the learned style with references to Greek myth, and strongly influenced by Catullus (himself influenced by the Greeks of Alexandria—in particular Callimachus and Philotas). Like Catullus, Tibullus was bisexual, if the poems are to be believed in any autobiographical sense. He always uses closed couplets, hexameter and pentameter, and usually end-stopped lines.

Philip Dunlop's very detailed and helpful Introduction gives a lot of the historical background as well as all the known facts about Tibullus, whose biography (like Shakespeare's) could easily be written on one side of a postcard. Besides the two books known to be by him, the translation also includes "The Tibullan Collection", the authorship of which is obscure; though the names of Lygdamus and Sulpicia are attached to it. The poems are mainly erotic, with a certain amount of ironic self-criticism (the writer about love who can't practise what he preaches). Quintilian described Tibullus' style as *tersus atque elegans*; André Chenier imitated him, and the French have always valued him more than the English. He is good, like many Latin poets, at onomatopoeia: *naufraga quam vasti tunderet unda maris* (literally="which the shipbreaking wave of the vast sea pounds"). It is often a cosy, quietist poetry:

How pleasant to hear the unbending gales from
the bedroom,
Holding my mistress in my unwarlike arms.

This is Dunlop's equivalent for the elegiac couplet. Sometimes he uses rhyme, and this can lead to clumsiness of scansion and expression:

1. *You, uncomplaisant keeper's door, may showers*
Lash you, and thunderbolts hurled by Jove's
powers.

2. *Booty has armed hosts warring with fierce breath;*
Hence blood, murder, and shorter roads to death.

The scansion here is a bit wobbly; but not much more so than in parts of Donne's Elegies. Dunlop also runs into one of the traps set by English slang—"a gang of blooming boys." Nevertheless he has his successes:

It was not for release I made my prayer,
(I could not), but that you should also care.

Tibullus, undertranslated by comparison with his great contemporaries, does live again in this book.

THE GREAT LATIN elegiac poets were reckoned by the Ancients to be Catullus, Ovid, Propertius and Gallus (now lost). Indeed Propertius,[3] largely because of Ezra Pound's efforts in 1917, has received more publicity than Tibullus. He was also (unless you count FitzGerald's Omar Khayyam) the first old foreign poet to inspire "versions"—poems that don't try for anything approaching word-for-word translation but give a general impression of what the original poems were like. It is towards this looser kind of translation that John Warden's work tends. The vocabulary is modern ("dolled-up hair", "drunk as a lord", "have a go"), though there is no attempt to find exact modern parallels to the daily life of Ancient Rome. Warden uses a short mod line, mostly without rhyming and with occasional interjections that can seem a little naive ("SHE's MINE!"). Some poems are translated into roughly rhyming quatrains, some are in *vers libre*. He leaves out a few of the Classical allusions. The result of this variety of form—and of the simplifying—is to give the poems a kind of freshness, updating them as it were into the age of Adrian Henri:

love has no love for the healer's craft
examples: (a) Philoctetes
lame
(b) Phoenix
blind
(c) Androgeon
dead

This compares well with the fixed couplet used (for example) in the Penguin Propertius, where a certain deadness can't quite be kept at bay:

What mission brought the Muses to my bed
To my amazement, when the dawn was red?

Although the Ancients regarded elegiac poetry as light verse compared to the thundering public epics they were always writing, one doesn't want a translation that is too flip any more than one that seems dull. After all, if sexual love is serious, these poems are serious. Warden's translation fairly effectively steers a middle course.

Martial (40–104 A.D.) is post-Augustan, and by now enjoys a reputation almost as high as

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[2] *The Poems of Tibullus.* The poems of Tibullus with the Tibullan Collection. Translated by PHILIP DUNLOP. Penguin Books, 40p.

[3] *The Poems of Propertius.* Translated by JOHN WARDEN. Bobbs-Merrill, $8.50, paper $2.95, £1.50.

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that of Catullus. James Michie[4] has translated a selection of the epigrams—about one tenth of what Martial wrote. He has the text on the facing page— a great advantage if you can read Latin— an Introduction, Notes, an Index. "An epigrammatist has to appear angry", as Michie says (just as he has to write poems in praise of his patron), and it seems possible that in spite of his satirical tone Martial really loved it all. What could be better for a satirist to live in than a huge decadent city? And Rome, as Michie also says, was the first modern megalopolis, the first big town that its inhabitants felt the need to escape from. Michie uses rhyme, and makes his Martial much more like the English idea of an epigram than like the epigrams in the Greek Anthology. There isn't much pure humour in Latin literature (as opposed to waspishness and scurrility) but Martial is often very funny. *Quem recitas meus est, o Fidentine, libellus:/ sed male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.* (I.38). Translated:

They're mine, but while a fool like you recites
My poems I resign the author's rights.

Generally, however, Michie uses a quatrain to translate one-couplet epigrams, as in II.20:

He buys up poems for recital
And then as "author" reads.
Why not? The purchase proves the title.
Our words become his "deeds".

This in fact is one degree wittier than the original —which doesn't have the wordplay. The 4-line epigrams appear as 6 rhyming lines (sometimes even 8), and Michie makes it easier for himself by leaving out the names of the addressees. He simplifies, and expands as little as possible:

I wrote, she never replied:
That goes on the debit side.
And yet I'm sure she read it:
That I put down as credit.

This would still be a good poem, whether the Martial original existed or not.

Michie also uses free-ranging Ogden Nash rhyming lines for some of the longer poems. This was a brilliant idea because it gives him room to manoeuvre (see IX, 68 for example):

An anvil being banged to make a lawyer a bronze equestrian statue
Can't, for sheer din, match you.

Occasionally he is forced to explain, as well as

[4] *The Epigrams of Martial.* Translated by JAMES MICHIE. Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, £2.95.

O peaceful country!
Land of my parents!
How fresh and green is the grass along the shore!
How soft and yellow is the flowing water!

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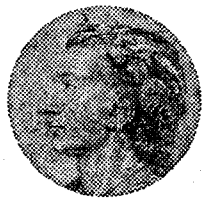

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translate (II.15. *Quod nulli calicem tuum propinas/ humane facis, Hormus, non superbe*="Hormus, it's thoughtful of you, not stuck-up,/ Not to drink healths. Who'd risk sharing your cup?"). The ghost of Harry Graham haunts one or two:

Aper the archer's rich wife, struck
Through the heart by his own shaft, was killed.
All sports consist of skill and luck:
She was unlucky, he is skilled.

Amiable but unco-operative,
Sweet-natured but a grouse—
Though I can't live without you, I can live
Without you in the house.

Peter Porter,[5] if you like to think of him as the boy from Brisbane, has obvious affinities with Martial (*The Kid from Spain*[6]). Both once moved from the "provinces" to centres of sophistication (London and Rome).

Porter also has a good Introduction, describing Martial's life and times, defending the variety of forms he (Porter) uses. His translations, as he says, are more often "imitations", with anachronism employed to make the points quickly for a modern reader, and this is their great strength:

Because I don't attempt those modern poems
like lost papyri or Black Mountain Lyrics
stuffed with Court House Records, non sequiturs,
and advice on fishing; and since my lines
don't pun with mild obscenities in
the Sunday Times. . . .

Twelve lines are here (II.86) expanded to 20—and all the better for it. He often has the right light-hearted bitterness:

Only a miserable boar so small
a dwarf could have throttled it
one-handed.

You need to know a little sexual slang: "She won't/ carve or slice you but she'll plate you" (II.17)—though a Note does explain this one. Some are triumphantly successful (II.52):

Dasius, chucker-out
at the Turkish Baths,
is a shrewd assessor;
when he saw big titted
Spatale coming, he decided
to charge her entry for three
persons. What did she do?
Paid with pride of course.

Also good is III.35. "Instant Fish/ by Phidias!/

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[5] *After Martial.* By PETER PORTER. Oxford University Press, £1.
[6] A well-known 'thirties movie, starring Eddie Cantor.

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Add water/ and they swim." Other Porterly lines include:

Tereus the Terrible eating filial pie.

Daedalus fitting out his son with Woolworth wings,

Is that Fame, that creature that beckoned,
With slatted sides and a charnel breath
And a club badge saying Kiss Me Death?

a sort of famished Bunny, too often topped
and tailed.

Sometimes he uses rhyme, sometimes not. Sometimes—where they overlap—he is no more of an "imitator" than Michie (XI.99 and XI.104 for example). Honours are about even, where they can be compared. In VI.66 (the "Bunny" poem, about auctioning a girl with suspected VD) Michie just has the edge—more concise and makes the point more neatly. Also, in III.12 (about the mean host who is generous with perfume but not with food), Martial has 6 lines, Michie 7, Porter 10; and his final couplet ("To be anointed but unable to ingest/ Is the fate of a corpse, not of a guest") is a bit wooden compared to Michie's ("To be embalmed without being fed/ Makes a man feel distinctly dead"). Likewise in V.34 Michie's condensed version, though it's a bit like William Johnson Cory and a standard Golden Treasury poem, does have more shape and the rhyme holds it together. Porter's expansion, unrhyming, has added lines that don't help ("A home-/ bred slave yet tender as a golden dormouse,/ rarer than the Phoenix, whiter than/ an unsmudged lily—"). Where Michie translates: "formal togas worn seldom", Porter has "Hardly ever required to wear a suit." This illustrates part of the difference between them. Michie is smoother, slicker, more urbane; his liking is for couplets and quatrains. Porter's rhymed versions are open-ended and fluent, skilful rather than neat; and he uses more ambitious rhyming schemes. He obviously likes the epigrams on death; but he has a lot of successes with different kinds of poem (VI.19, VI.23, VIII.29, where he gives a particular modern example, Michie remains general, XII.34, XII.85).

Far and away the best is VI.39 (Cinna's illegitimate sons by his servants—serving his wife) which is as good as an original Porter poem. Nobody else could have done this anything like as well. One could say: If you want Martial, take Michie (175 epigrams and text)—if you want Porter, take Porter (47 epigrams, no text). But it isn't quite as simple as that, or like a record-reviewer's best buy. All the virtue isn't on one side; and from either you would have a good idea of Martial's genius.

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Moral Dandies

By Douglas Dunn

CERTAIN characteristic turns of phrase in Auden's "later style" have consistently aroused the contempt or bewilderment of his readers, depending perhaps on how seriously they take the view of him as a "lost leader." "Just reeling off" the names of lakes was said in "Bucolics" to be "ever so comfy", and, with almost malicious gratitude, some critics adopted the phrase as a convenient summary of Auden's pith and outlook.

His love of words does have the appearance of a domestic pleasure. Poets, however, have paraded their genius in all manner of outrageous poses, and that of armchair moralist, safe and beslippered beside the dictionaries, is neither more nor less reprehensible than any other. "Stark bewölkt", a poem which contains such words as "photophil", "unthuswise", "phyllomania", "ugsome", and so on, ends like this:

If you merely wish our world
to mend its ways, remember
when happy, men on the whole
behave a wee bit better
when unhappy, always worse.

"A wee bit better" . . . it sounds like David Hume talking to a seven-year-old with some talent for moral philosophy, a genial and humorous way of simplifying the message. And Auden's use of unfamiliar words is part of the same cultured, English and avuncular pose. The very title of his new book—*Epistle to a Godson*[1]—implies the tone of speaking to a younger man, so that he might benefit from the special understandings of what can be written, with propriety and value, only by the pen of an established Elder. Many of the poems have as subject matter, or profess in other ways, the quality of what it is to be 65 years old, and to be W. H. Auden.

Auden may well have reminded other readers of Mr Brooke in *Middlemarch*, a "man of miscellaneous opinions, and uncertain vote", though not a man of "acquiescent temper":

Wild horses could not drag me to debates on
Art and Society: *critics with credos,*
Christian or Marxist, should keep their traps shut,
lest they spout nonsense.

While some of his "miscellaneous opinions" can be endorsed, like the one just quoted, others are no more than amusingly entrenched, and a few are offensive, even when they take the form of passionate whimsy. With petulant fondness, he remembers, in "Epistle to a Godson", the time when

the poor were what they were used to being,
the creators of wealth, not, as now they are,
an expensive nuisance.

There are some who will look at that and say, "I don't like it. But it is, after all, a fact." If statements of that sort are the product of the "staid commonsense" in which Auden says that even the wildest of poems must, like prose, be firmly based, then it seems better to be wrong and humane than be right and cruel, assuming that it is always possible to have a choice in what one writes about, or, like Mr Auden's "critics with credos", keep one's trap shut.

Happily, Auden is at his best in his new book when being less cantankerous. "The Art of Healing" is graciously elegiac, and the "Lines to Dr Walter Birk" add up to an affectionate valediction of sane, positive and aphoristic warmth. "A New Year Greeting" is admirably inventive, as is "Moon Landing." Best of all, however, are the three poems with which the book ends, "Talking to Dogs," "Talking to Mice," and "Talking to Myself." In more grateful days, Auden's gift might have been called Wisdom; but the fashions of art and literature have created distrust of anything superlative, or even correct.

IT WOULD BE DAFT to say that Peter Porter[2] is in any way similar to Auden, yet there is some evidence that Porter has learned about writing from him—something beyond a few cadences picked up here and there, or a shared fondness for German and Italian art and music. Porter's poems are as good as they are because his imagination is unusual and complex, and he has, from a dedication to craft, acquired a formidable technique.

Porter's imagination could be said to be energetically sub-Augustan. In "May, 1945," a personification, "the wraith of History," is made to speak the last lines of the poem:

To go with teeth and toes and human soap,
the radio will broadcast Bruckner's Eighth
so that good and evil may die in equal hope.

Few poets would—or could—use such an artificial property.

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[1] *Epistle to a Godson.* By W. H. AUDEN. Faber & Faber, £1.40.

[2] *Preaching to the Converted.* By PETER PORTER. Oxford University Press, £1.

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It is no longer possible for an imagination, a way of conceiving, to be as unified or stable as "sub-Augustan" implies. If there is much of the dark underside of *The Dunciad* in Porter, there is a more Romantic regret and disappointment with the Age, and with himself, an elegiac, almost funerary obsession, that while penetrating Augustan concerns of Love, Truth, and Right Living, has less to do with Auden's "staid commonsense" than with mystery, intuition, and personality.

Porter's style is "impure"; it is, in the classical sense, "mixed," and wonderfully so, both as regards the writing itself—high style and low style—and thematic conjurations of past and present, as in "The Great Cow Journeys On," "Delphi," and in other poems when he assumes his role of historical caricaturist. His "low style" is probably the more striking; it springs on to the page as if from an overhearing of haywire metropolitan lunch-time conversations, but often in brilliantly conceived situations. In "An Affair of the Heart," for example, he can portray misgivings at the way his heart works in terms of sexual endeavour, and his invention here is exhaustive. "High style" is easier to write, and certainly what "poetry lovers" most like to read; in Porter's case it is often elegiac, as in "Fossil Gathering," or "Thomas Hardy at Westbourne Park Villas," which ends with "Ordinary gestures of time working on faces the watermarks of hell." Any more rhetorical, and the reader might have died of it.

For all the satirical appearance of many of his poems, only a few are attempts at precise satire ("The School for Love," "The Isle of Ink") and even these have as much to do with conserving his own sanity as condemning the wastefulness of others. Instead of satire as such, the impression is that Porter's imagination has been infected by dislikes. He laments contemporary horrors as if he were the maestro of a famous Carnival shut down because of plague. The funfair has closed, but middle-aged lovers partake of

> *More luncheons than lust,*
> *more meetings on Northern line stations,*
> *more discussions of children's careers.*

Porter is more than just a "social poet." He is a tragedian who can't stop laughing. At the same time, the feeling of the world we live in—the world of our art, the world of our lives—is gone over in these poems with a dire, disappointed gusto. There are few tunes, few melodies, very little praise, but a great deal of assurance.

CONSIDERABLE APPLICATION is necessary before realising that whatever else Peter Redgrove's poems are, they are far from vague.

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An imagination as odd and bulky as Redgrove's demands a galvanising verbal unexpectedness to spark his universal mysteries and obsessions into poetic form. There were times when poetry of such strangeness used to recommend itself as the only true way, implying that earthen and hydrological mysteries were the prime attention of poets, and that real worlds of commonplace passions were uninteresting, because temporal. Poets dedicated to a single overview—mythological, scientific, Christian, surrealist, or anything else of that sort—have had their day. Redgrove is not, however, a poet of single faith, although his contribution to *the Review's* symposium on "the state of poetry" must have convinced many people, and perhaps himself, that he is. "Interior sensitivity" was the phrase he used in *the Review*, recommending whatever was meant by that as the most fruitful line of growth in new poetry. Can there be *any* poetry without "interior sensitivity"? And yet, reading *Dr Faust's Sea-Spiral Spirit*,[3] one realises that what Redgrove is recommending—in the book by example, in *the Review* by precept—is that imagination is the essential quality of poetry.

Redgrove's imagery is hard, experienced, seen, felt, smelt, and real. He possesses an extraordinary verbalising gift that associates him with Plath, Hughes, and Roethke. His free verse is—well, is free verse, but interesting free verse. He has taken to heart Eliot's remark that "No *vers* is ever *libre* for the man who wants to do a good job." He can be rhythmical in sudden bursts of energy, and is capable of as many ways of saying as the Prime Minister has suits. Redgrove's histrionic gifts can even reproduce the Shakespeherian Rag:

Ah, Sir, would that there could at last be seen to shine
Some lightness, some brightness at my eyes, unborn,
but shining there,
Like stars grown great with feeling, leaning over . . .

Or, remembering the title, perhaps it mimics Marlowe. Elsewhere, his imagery is as racy and domestic as Plath's:

Summer-yolk
Hangs heavy in the sky, ready to rupture in slow swirls,
Immense custard . . .

There are many more examples of this, all part of a grotesque revelry in language that's rare in contemporary poetry. His poems are ambitious in the best sense—he doesn't seem to be trying. They have a beautiful and almost haphazard natural exactitude that could be said to be apt in relation to a nervous, bustling imagination, not a preconceived model of how poems should be shaped. Most contemporary poetry moves forward in short, organised narrative steps, dying falls, sinkings, isolated glamorous lines, moral endings. Not so Redgrove's; he jumps in shouting.

TITLES LIKE "Pushkin. A Didactic Poem" make my eyes blink. If it's by Donald Davie, as this one is, it's likely to read like a brilliant tutorial. Many of his other earlier poems in *Collected Poems*,[4] especially those in quatrains, are neat, well-turned, and so literary that one feels ashamed to have defended the literary and traditional principles of poetry in the past. Elegance is always welcome, in an age of shuffling and vulgar verbosity, but the effort to be elegant can often seem like straining after gentlemanly status, as if, in Davie's case, he wanted to *be* a Late Augustan, not just write like one.

On the whole, in his earlier poems, so iambic a moral imagination amounts to a tediousness that grudging admiration for its "craftsmanship" cannot redeem. In retrospect, they appear to have been written by a talented, Puritan, undergraduate soul regretting it did not believe in torment, or natural sensations for their own sake. This impression is not the whole story. There are lines like

Fattily urbane
Under the great drum, pigeons foul their nest

which are less conscious of their own neatness, while his overtly rhetorical lines are usually as convincingly measured as

Largesse,
Suppose it but of rhetoric, endears,
Disseminated quite at large to bless
The waste, superb profusion of the spheres.

It would be stupid to reiterate the old criticisms of Davie, that he couldn't be bothered (or was unable) to feel. *Events and Wisdoms* (1964) and *Essex Poems* (1969) are to my mind such an advance on his earlier books that even if the criticism was correct it has been decisively overtaken. These lines have a quality of feeling and sensuousness I find admirable:

Not one scent could I name
In the resinous die-straight avenue's
Plume-irrigated air.

Davie appears to have taken himself too seriously as a moral dandy. He fears for the corruption of the language, like Auden and Porter, but before the superb and dashing *Six Epistles to Eva Hesse* (1970) was unable to dramatise these feelings with the liveliness of satire, invective, and

[3] *Dr Faust's Sea-Spiral Spirit*. By PETER REDGROVE. Routledge, £1.50, paper 75p.
[4] *Collected Poems*. By DONALD DAVIE. Routledge, £3.75.

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the naming of names. Also, purity of diction is not the only purity Davie is interested in. There are some disrespectful lines in "England"—a poem about Scotland, and Scotsmen in Canada, oddly enough—in which College of Education girls spread their excited thighs to the sound of a combo. Mr Priapus ought to have a word in Davie's ear; the message is likely to be that most young ladies believe in love and honesty.

Davie's interest in the history of North America as poetic subject matter probably derives from the Projectivist writers whom Davie admires. However, it goes as far back as *Sequence for Francis Parkman* (1961). (Parkman was the author of a multi-volume work on *France and England in North America*.) Notes to "England", "Vancouver", "Trevenen" and "Commodore Barry" list similar books as Davie's sources, and although I find it interesting that Davie should want to introduce the methods of Duncan, Olson, Ed Dorn and others into the tradition of British poetry, there seems something barren about a poetry based on historical and geographical treatises.

IAIN CRICHTON SMITH is so prolific he can publish two volumes simultaneously, and, remarkably, with different publishers.[5] Unfortunately, although Smith can organise poems for maximum effect, much of the writing is slack:

> *You lived in Glasgow many years ago.*
> *I do not find your breath in the air.*
> *It was, I think, in the long-skirted thirties*
> *when idle men stood at every corner*
> *chewing the fag-ends of a failed culture.*

The first line is a fact, and there is no quarrelling with facts. The second hardly seems the perception it's meant to be, while "I think" is redundant, and the last line is more than familiar as well as a poetic overstatement, culture mistaken for economics.

Smith succeeds in generalising about death, about which one would have thought not much more could be said, although every poet who ever wrote, or will write, is at pains to say something about it. Highland landscape and wildlife, the Western seas, episodes of his mother's life, are the settings, and the gathering image of death in that context is moving. There are good lines; mussels are "fixed in place, slums on the ancient rock in salty rows."

The love poems of the title offer a lyrical realism that probably owes something to Ian

[5] *Love Poems & Elegies*. By IAIN CRICHTON SMITH. Gollancz, £1.50. *Hamlet in Autumn*. By IAIN CRICHTON SMITH. Lines Review Editions, 80p.

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Hamilton's *The Visit*. Smith has always been skilful; there has always been a sureness of eye, a troubled personality, a drama that he often handles through images. His sense of humour has never been strong, but it doesn't have to be, although he can visualise Napoleon as a Hollywood producer minus cigar. *Hamlet in Autumn* is the more interesting of the two books: he takes more chances, working toward a sparser, more severe writing, and, although neither of these collections is as good as *From Bourgeois Land*, they might indicate that a poet who has shifted restlessly from influence to influence is on his way to something new.

SEAMUS HEANEY IS A POET of the one Irish impulse; he is a dedicated exponent of the well-made Irish poem. *Wintering Out*,[6] his third book, has already disappointed some reviewers who expected more poems directly to do with "the troubles" of Heaney's native North of Ireland. What there is in the book about that subject is passive and disappointed, as in "Linen Town", or "A Northern Horde." He says, "We petrify or uproot now," and these attitudes of fixity, terror, and flight are more than understandable. Of his dilemma, he says:

I am riding to plague again.
Sometimes under a sooty wash
From the grate in the burnt-out gable
I see the needy in a small pow-pow.
What do I say if they wheel out their dead?
I'm cauterized, a black stump of home.

In "Anahorish," a poem about a loved, primary place, he savours the name as "soft gradient/ of consonant, vowel meadow,/ after-image of lamps/ swung through the yards/ on winter evenings." This suggests almost everything about Heaney's poetic—relished sounds, evocative pictures you can almost touch. "Soft gradient/ of consonant, vowel meadow" does, however, imply a love of musical legato that Heaney's poetry is often at pains to avoid. If Heaney is concerned in his poems with Irish destiny ("Bog Oak", "Traditions", etc.) he is equally conscious of a personal heritage of the Irishness of Irish-English. "The Wool Trade" is prefixed by Stephen Dedalus's sense of how Irish-English is different from English itself. In what way this is so is beyond my knowledge, but the quotation from *Ulysses* is enough to go on. Just before the words Heaney excerpts, Dedalus heard the Dean of Studies talking about a funnel, and asked him, "What funnel?" "The funnel through which you pour the oil into your lamp." "That?" said Dedalus. "Is that called a funnel? Is it not a tundish?" Now a word like "tundish" would be exactly at home in Heaney's poems. There are words as odd to me as "tundish" already there. And the movement of his language, like Pound's, is more "sculptural" than slow-raking, while his images are as bright and mysterious as

The moon's host elevated
in a monstrance of holly trees.

Poems as careful and impassioned as those in *Wintering Out* owe nothing to fads and fashions.

There is sufficient range in Stewart Conn's *An Ear to the Ground*[7] to help shift his reputation away from poems about North Ayrshire in times before he was born and by which he is usually anthologised. Some of the best poems in his new book are in the same old territory. While these have not yet degenerated into fatty nostalgia, there is an air of having seen it before; but it has to be admitted that if one adds up all the poems from the same impulse, the total sequence is an impressive working-through of an area and set of characters.

Conn's writing is hard and deliberately formed; his earnest application to form and control, however, fails to prevent the occasional carelessness. For a playwright, Conn is less theatrical than I would expect. There is one effective dramatic monologue, spoken by an actor of the old school, but elsewhere he prefers to work by image, as in a documentary series about Glasgow ("A Sense of Order", "Portents") which takes on a subject that, considering the size of Glasgow and the number of poets who live there, has seldom been done before. A subject of that sort suits his way of writing, and he makes the most of it. It indicates a more interesting line of growth than his poems about the Highlands, his mordant poem about marriage (passing through Gretna Green, "heavy anvils strike") or a longish historical piece about the South-West of France.

A LOCAL HABITATION[8] is Norman Nicholson's first collection since 1954, although his continued existence was brought to our attention with *Selected Poems* in 1967. It could have been anticipated that there would be poems in the new book about not writing poems—"The Dumb Spirit", "The Whisperer." But the more interesting poems are still those about Millom, where Nicholson lives in the house in which he was born. His jaunty, lyrical narratives are characterised by these lines from "To the Memory of a Millom Musician":

[6] *Wintering Out*. By SEAMUS HEANEY. Faber & Faber, £1.
[7] *An Ear to the Ground*. By STEWART CONN. Hutchinson, £1.
[8] *A Local Habitation*. By NORMAN NICHOLSON. Faber & Faber, £1.

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And Harry, dumped in the lateral
Moraine of middle age,
Strummed back the golden dole-days
When the boys with never a chance
Went without dinner
For a tanner for the dance.

Many of the poems hark back to the time when a tanner was currency, but Nicholson's retrospection is much grimmer than nostalgia for the 1920s and 1930s when the poor took the first step on the road to becoming what Mr Auden would call "an expensive nuisance." There is little point in saying that this kind of poem has value as a "social document"—that's no way for a poem to be valued. A robust language and heavy, steady music is what he ought to be read for, while his descriptions of nature, as in "Scree" or "September on the Mosses", can almost emulate in the language the imaginative impact of sights.

Written on Water,[9] as the title of Charles Tomlinson's collection suggests, is about the variable habits of what can be seen or felt; the habits of water, light, and air; and of people, art, objects. Tomlinson's *gravitas* produces good lines, as, for example, these at the end of "Mackinnon's Boat":

Making a time
Where no day has a name, the smells
Of diesel, salt and tobacco mingle:
They linger down a wake whose further lines
Are beginning to slacken and fall back to where
Salt at last must outsavour name and time
In the alteration of the forgetful waters.

Heavy stuff, indeed; but Tomlinson's intellectual passion is human and sympathetic under its surrounding blanket of seriousness. Too ponderous an emphasis on the metaphysicality of his poems, or, for that matter, his much talked-about "New World poetic", detracts from the interests of what seems to me a rather old-fashioned blend of intelligence, imagination and craft, more English in impact than Tomlinson's well-known estimate of W. C. Williams suggests.

[9] *Written on Water*. By CHARLES TOMLINSON. Oxford, £1.

Turgenev's Privacy

By April FitzLyon

ON THE FACE OF IT, Turgenev was the most open of men. Extremely sociable and a beguiling conversationalist, he had a vast circle of friends all over Europe; and there was scarcely anyone of note, from Bettina von Arnim to Swinburne, with whom he was not acquainted. Reticence did not seem part of his nature; and some of the intimate confessions which he frequently made still make faintly embarrassing reading. With the publication of the Soviet Academy of Sciences' "complete" edition of his *Works* (15 volumes) and *Letters* (15 volumes), Moscow, 1960–68, and various complementary volumes, all meticulously and exhaustively edited, it seemed that there could be very little more to know about either Turgenev or his works. Scarcely a day of his life has not been accounted for; anything he put down on paper, including doodles, after-dinner doggerel and contributions to party games, has been scrupulously annotated. We know all about his money matters, the trains he caught, the birds he shot, the dogs he owned. We know all about his digestion, and the most intimate details of his illnesses, real and imagined. And yet, in spite of all this vast material, useful and useless, we still know a great deal less than all. Anyone studying Turgenev must occasionally feel that the seeming openness was false; that he was, in reality, exceedingly devious; that he wrote thousands of letters, spoke millions of words to conceal, rather than reveal, the most important things about himself; and that the vast amount of information we do possess is in reality only the tip of an iceberg. The fact that he was able for forty years to keep his contemporaries guessing about the precise nature of his relationship with Pauline Viardot, although they were both extremely well-known public figures living in the glare of publicity, shows how adroit he was at concealing what he did not wish to reveal. Many enigmas remain in his work, too. Much of it, particularly his late work, leaves a sensitive reader today pensive; *Faust, Apparitions, Clara Milich, A Song of Triumphant Love*, and many passages in other works, make the Soviet view of him as a pillar of Realism difficult to swallow; and the dreams which pervade all his works have, in the 20th century, taken on a new significance.

By leaving all the papers he had with him in Paris when he died to Pauline Viardot, Turgenev infuriated his compatriots and succeeded in keeping his posthumous privacy for much longer

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than he would have done otherwise. Pauline Viardot herself and, after her death in 1910, her family, divulged very little from their archives through the years. It was generally suspected that this was either because the family wished to conceal proof that Pauline Viardot had, in fact, been Turgenev's mistress, or because someone—probably Madame Viardot herself—had simply destroyed the documents. Both these suspicions have now been proved false. In 1968 Madame Maupoil, Pauline Viardot's grand-daughter, donated a considerable number of letters to the Bibliothèque Nationale, some of which have now been published by Professor Granjard with the assistance of Alexandre Zviguilsky;[1] and at about the same time Madame Martine Le Cesne, Pauline Viardot's great-great-grand-daughter, put her collection at the disposal of Alexandre Zviguilsky, who has published two volumes of letters.[2] All these letters were originally written in French and most, but not all, are addressed to members of the Viardot family. In particular, there are 146 new letters to Pauline Viardot, and 112 to her hitherto known only in Russian translation or with cuts; 62 letters to her daughter Claudie; and 20 letters from Pauline to Turgenev, the first ever published.

THE DISCOVERY of this material represents one of the most exciting events in Turgenev studies for a very long time. The letters contain one major revelation about Turgenev's personal life; much new and absorbing information about his work; many admirable portraits of his contemporaries, and comments on life and art; and some factual information, mostly of relatively minor importance, which has hitherto escaped the specialists. Yet, the total effect of all this new material is not to make Turgenev's life and work less enigmatic, but more so. These new letters pose more questions than they answer.

They do nothing to elucidate Turgenev's relationship with Pauline Viardot. Details are filled in, suspicions confirmed, facts and dates sorted out; but the general outline of what Professor Schapiro calls "the most important thing that ever happened to Turgenev"[3] remains blurred, and much as we have known it up till now. We still don't know if the relationship was platonic or not; and, in spite of the newly-discovered letters from Pauline, we still don't really know her side of the story.

What we do have is a large number of new letters to Pauline in which Turgenev pours out to that highly intelligent woman his thoughts on life, people, books, ideas—and these make fascinating reading. The correspondence covers almost forty years; whether one is interested in Turgenev himself, or in the art, literature and politics of the epoch both in Russia and in Europe, it is a very rich source. Whether Turgenev is discussing the death of Gogol, the dress-rehearsal of Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*, the poetry of Tennyson or the music of Berlioz, his comments, though often controversial, are always worth reading. However, one can well understand why Madame Viardot was reluctant for many of his remarks about people, often personal friends, to be published while they or their relatives were still alive. We read of Robert Browning: ". . . very empty and not very amusing." Of Patti: ". . . no singer and, above all, no actress." Of Madame de Castiglione (the mistress of Napoleon III): ". . . wearing a high powdered hairstyle, with a *whole* pheasant stuck on top. Well, it suited her! But she's getting more and more like a melancholically capricious tart." Meyerbeer: ". . . with his old spectacle-maker's profile." Renan: ". . . a dainty seminarist." The Prince Consort: ". . . an ambassadress's footman." Lamartine: ". . . a poor old dethroned king." But not all Turgenev's comments were malicious; his tributes to those he loved or admired were warm and generous: Flaubert: ". . . one of the human beings I loved most in the world." Gogol: "He was more than just a writer to us—he revealed us to ourselves." Delacroix: ". . . that great painter or poet, I don't know which . . . a torrent of poetry, sometimes muddy, but which sweeps you along."

Turgenev's reading was vast and eclectic. It ranged from Calderón, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Pascal, Goethe, Keats, all in the original languages, to most of the writers, Russian and foreign, of his own day. Pascal's *Pensées*, "the most terrible, the most devastating book ever printed," had a shattering effect on him, as repeated references to it show. Pascal " . . . tramples on everything man holds dearest, knocks you down into the mud and then, to console you, offers you a bitter, violent religion . . . ." But, he added, ". . . what free, strong, bold, grandiose language!"

IT IS THE LETTERS to Claudie, Pauline's second daughter, which are a major revelation, while at the same time deepening the enigma of Turgenev's personal life. Claudie, or Didie as

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[1] *Lettres inédites à Pauline Viardot et à sa famille.* Edition Etablie par Henri Granjard et Alexandre Zviguilsky, préface de Henri Granjard. By IVAN TOURGUENEV. Lausanne, Editions L'Age d'Homme.

[2] *Nouvelle correspondance -inédite*, Tome I & II. Textes recueillis, annotés et précédés d'une introduction par Alexandre Zviguilsky. By IVAN TOURGUENEV. Paris, Librairie des Cinq Continents, 50 NF and 27 NF respectively.

[3] *Spring Torrents.* By IVAN TURGENEV. Translated by LEONARD SCHAPIRO, with notes and a critical essay. Eyre Methuen, £2.95.

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he called her, was born in 1852 when Turgenev was thirty-four. She could not have been his daughter, as his blatant adoration for her sometimes led people to suppose. But from the moment he learned that Pauline was expecting her—and there is reason to suspect that this pregnancy was an attempt on Pauline's part to break with Turgenev and to resuscitate her marriage—he loved her as he could never, in spite of an honest attempt to do so, love his own natural daughter Paulinette.

"It's true that there aren't many children like yours," he told Pauline, "and there is only one Didie in the world. Don't read this to her; she doesn't need to hear these words to know that I belong to her, but she might put a dog-collar on me as she does on Flambeau, and the worst of it is, I shouldn't mind." Claudie was ten when Turgenev wrote that prophetic phrase; just what age she was when his feelings for her became more than purely paternal, it is difficult to say. But by the time she was seventeen he was already writing all his intimate thoughts to her, as he had done and continued to do to her mother. His letters are a strange mixture of adult ideas—his horror at the public execution of Troppmann, for example —jumbled up with comments on people and art, amusing drawings, and a lot of childish "nonsense" "to make Claudie laugh." As the correspondence progresses, it becomes clear that Turgenev's relationship with Claudie—and, after her marriage in 1874, with her husband—was an almost complete repetition of his relationship with Pauline and Louis Viardot. The same phrases recur, usually in German; there is the same obsession with hands; the same friendship with the husband; the same mildly masochistic strain. But these letters to Claudie contain more sensual overtones than those to Pauline; and Claudie (whose letters have all disappeared) seems to have responded to him more frankly than, so far as we can guess, her mother did. As Claudie grows older the "little things to make her laugh" take on an aspect so blatantly sexual, albeit expressed in symbols, that in 1973 there can be little doubt of their true meaning. Whether this was equally true in 1873, and whether both Turgenev and Claudie understood these passages as we must today, it is difficult to say.

Are the letters to Claudie love letters? Perhaps; one can't be sure. "As to your other question—do I love you very much!!! There's no need to reply. You know only too well what you are for me and what I feel for you." Or: "I kiss with the utmost tenderness your beautiful hands, your splendid eyes, and your dear mouth." Or: "I bless the whole of your beautiful body, and kiss whatever you allow me to kiss over and over again." We can interpret these phrases as we will;

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the enigma remains. All we can be sure of is that this was a relationship of the deepest importance, parallel to, and an extension of, Turgenev's relationship with Pauline. The figure of Gemma's daughter in *Spring Waters* now takes on a new significance.

ZVIGUILSKY believes that Maupassant knew about Turgenev's love for mother and daughter, and used his knowledge as the basis of his novel *Fort comme la mort* which deals with the same theme. This is not impossible; but Zviguilsky presses the comparison too far. A more seminal allusion, suggested to me by Adrian Johnson, is to Thomas Hardy's "fantastic tale" and essay in Platonic thought, *The Well-Beloved*, which treats the theme of the "visionary artist"—a sculptor in Hardy's novel, while Maupassant's hero is a painter—in love with three generations of women. Hardy almost certainly did not have Turgenev in mind when he wrote his fable of "the theory of the transmigration of the ideal beloved one, who only exists in the lover, from material woman to material woman"; but he perhaps gets closer to Turgenev's predicament than Maupassant does. It may be that only in his love for Pauline with its continuity assured by Claudie and, had he lived, by Claudie's daughter, did Turgenev find some respite from the obsessive fear of death which dominated his life, his dreams, and much of his work. It was in 1878, when his relationship with Claudie was at its height, that he wrote in one of his *Prose Poems*: "Love is stronger than death and the fear of death. Only by that, by love, does life hold together and continue." Was Claudie his lifeline?

Turgenev often discussed his work with Pauline, and valued her advice. With Claudie it was different; as an older man he seems to have mused on paper, without perhaps even expecting her to understand or reply. And we see from these musings that, far from having written himself out by the '70s, as many people believed, his mind was moving towards new ways of writing far removed from Realism—nearer, Zviguilsky believes with some reason, to what we now call Surrealism. In fact, the literary labels don't matter; Symbolism could equally be invoked. Turgenev was concerned, as so many artists were to be a generation later, with the seemingly

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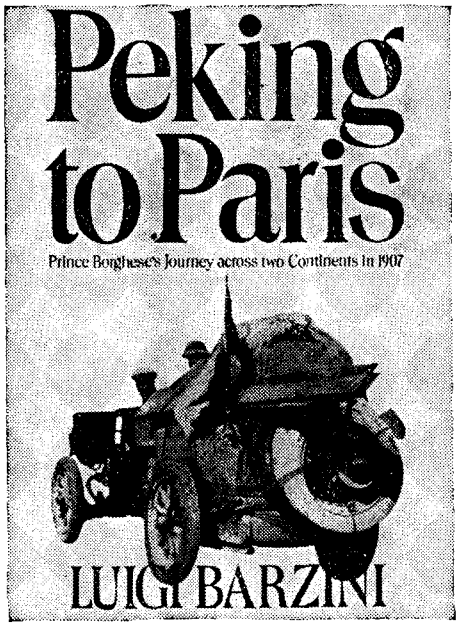

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inexplicable and inexpressible side of human experience. "I don't know if I shall make myself clear: but I think there is still something for a novelist to do—so far as true truth is concerned—not of details, realistic descriptions, but of feelings, moods. . . ." He was preoccupied by "double or contradictory feelings," which "cry out to merge"; by dreams; by "madness in art"; by things "strange and natural at the same time." Like Sanin in his *Spring Waters*—now beautifully translated anew by Professor Schapiro—he was aware of the monsters which lurk under the glassy surface of life's sea, and beneath the level of the conscious mind.

The dreams which obsessed Turgenev all his life and which recur through most of his work now reveal to us much about his inner life which, a century ago, was concealed from his readers and probably from Turgenev himself. His death in 1883 was on the eve of the new discoveries of Freud and—particularly relevant in Turgenev's case—Jung, which opened up a new world. Without any real knowledge of that world, Turgenev instinctively tried to express the uncharted territory of the subconscious; and perhaps, just because the territory was still uncharted, his expression of it is all the more authentic and striking today. If we re-read some of his early work and much of his late work, we find passages which recall the pictures of Odilon Redon—dreamlike, ambiguous, menacing, full of strange images. Perhaps Turgenev's tragedy was that intellectually he was a man of his own time, but emotionally and subconsciously he was a man of our time.

PROFESSOR SCHAPIRO, in the critical essay he appends to his translation of *Spring Waters*, is well aware of some of these themes. The publication of the new letters, which occurred after his essay was printed, does not, it seems to me, invalidate his arguments. Using Turgenev's deeply-felt and in some ways autobiographical *novella*, *Spring Waters*, as a pivotal point, he explores the four themes which he believes dominated Turgenev's life and work: the destructive force of the sexual passion: the unattainable illusion or ideal of happy lasting mutual love; the homage paid by the uncommitted to the committed; and the fear of enthusiasm. The resultant essay is the best introduction to this side of Turgenev's life and thought available in English. Professor Schapiro has already discussed some other aspects of Turgenev's thought in his *Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian Nineteenth Century Thought*.

It is regrettable that, through some quirk of French academic life obscure to outsiders, the newly-discovered letters to Pauline and Claudie Viardot should have been published by different editors in different editions; as a result, in order to read the correspondences chronologically, one must have two volumes open at the same time. Monsieur Zviguilsky's volumes—the second contains Turgenev's letters to various French friends—are by far the better produced and edited; his introduction is sometimes speculative, tendentious and controversial, but is really none the worse for that. He is particularly illuminating on the subject of that key figure, Louis Viardot, whom Professor Granjard dismisses as a boring nonentity; Viardot's letters to Turgenev are some of the most interesting in Zviguilsky's Volume II. Zviguilsky appends a useful bibliography, but his index does not include Turgenev's works. Professor Granjard's introduction, on the other hand, is so cautious as to be soporific, his notes are sparse and not very illuminating; and his proof-reading very inadequate. There are a good number of factual errors in both volumes, particularly where things English are concerned.

The definitive biography of Turgenev is yet to be written; no single work exists, in Russian or any other language, which adequately covers all aspects of his life and thought. When that work comes to be written, the four volumes here reviewed will be of paramount importance. Whether some future biographer will solve all the enigmas, or whether Turgenev will succeed in keeping some of his posthumous privacy for ever, remains to be seen. It also remains to be seen how Soviet critics will handle this new material, much of which may prove intractable to the Socialist Realist approach. Such comment as has appeared in the Soviet Union up till now has evaded this problem by simply ignoring those aspects of the new letters which are inconvenient to the Soviet point of view.

Brought to Book

NOT LONG AGO H. A. Mason declared his grave reservations about Shakespeare (Shakespeare at his best, that is: at his best he was not quite good enough), though with considerable feeling, and stimulatingly. Now Mr French comes along, with reservations about Mr Mason ("usually rather good at resisting *idées reçues*"), to carry the correction of Shakespeare a little further, and much less stimulatingly.[1] "I'm not saying Shakespeare is a bad writer, of course." But it sounds like that at times.

[1] *Shakespeare and the Critics*. By A. L. FRENCH. Cambridge University Press, £3.80. $13.50.

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One sees that it is the Bard's critics, some of them, who have incited Mr French. In the course of attacking their simple-minded admiration he is led to set about Shakespeare too, in a way not notably less simple-minded. He would say he is clearing the ground: it might seem that he is proposing to lay waste the richest stretches of Shakespeare. Apropos of views of Claudius, Mr French speaks of "the Victorian moral fervour" of Edward Dowden, as shared by L. C. Knights. What he himself offers instead is a modern (though not exactly new) chop-logical chilliness. Seeking to defend Claudius (why shouldn't he be angry when Hamlet is rude to him?), Mr French may look like one of those who, as Johnson put it, "hope for eminence from the heresies of paradox." Yet there sounds throughout a note of moral fervour, too, difficult though it is to account for. Does Mr French, a teacher of literature, really believe that students are being corrupted by the "prescriptive veneration" (Johnson again) accorded to Shakespeare? If he finds Shakespeare's greatest plays suspect, how does he deal with the lesser authors on the syllabus?

THE ASSAILANT of received (or supposedly received) ideas is under severe temptation to collapse backwards. Mr French is right in repudiating the cosy Christian-redemptive view of *King Lear* and of Lear—it is a heart-rending play—but can't he do so without rushing to the defence of Regan and Goneril ("Is it any wonder she thinks her palace has been turned into a bear-garden? . . . once again Goneril's voice has the ring of angry sincerity"), and without referring to those who are, not perfect, but patently the better people as "Lear and his partisans"? Rightly he rejects the view that *Antony and Cleopatra* is a celebration of some sort of "transcendental love." The play is much more interesting than that. It is also more interesting, and more complex, than Mr French's assimilation of it to Emma Bovary would allow. For all his air of a man who is not going to be conned, Mr French cons himself pretty thoroughly. At moments you might almost think he was laying into some national idol of the football field.

Like Mr Mason, when it comes to it, Mr French hesitates to stick the knife in very deep. There are some good, positive things here, including a mildly engaging defence of Polonius, a valuable "vindication" of Leontes' jealousy, and some just remarks on the "amusement" properly to be derived from parts of *Antony and Cleopatra*: a play which, though "it isn't, as it were, written in blood", "is not, of course, the story of a drunk and a whore." Perhaps it is chiefly the tone that is off-putting. A characteristic phrase of the author's is "I am sometimes tempted to feel. . . ." Would that he had succumbed!

D. J. Enright

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[1] *Internal Colloquies: The Poems and Plays of I. A. Richards.* Routledge & Kegan Paul, £4.00.

Plato, Satan & Mountains

FORTY AND MORE YEARS ago, at Aberdeen Grammar School and at St Andrews, I learned as much as I have ever learned, from *Practical Criticism* and *Principles of Literary Criticism*, about how to read a poem (I wish I had learned a little more about how to write one). Twenty-five or more years ago, I met Ivor and Dorothea (I think D's real Christian name is Dorothy, but the Greek form, a gift of God, suits her) in Hong Kong and friendship was cemented when the two of them, in climbing gear, walked past our house on Lake Chusenji, Ivor's shirt and back all torn and bloody because a straw bridge, over a mountain stream, had collapsed. My wife dabbled soothing lotions on the illustrious back, and since then friendship with I. and D. has been the most morally and intellectually sustaining of all my friendships, though we see each other in London only about once a year and the last gap between meetings was three years.

Every time I meet them both, I learn something about myself, about life, about poetry, about society, though what I learn could never be glibly paraphrased. As Richards himself might put it: "?learn?"—"*what*?"—the *what* is the Unknowable or the Unknown, the *mysterium tremendum*, the DNA shaping our lives and poems: not objectifiable, and "one knows and does not know" that one knows it. What one *knows* (in one sense, very deeply) without *knowing* in another (an easily conceptualisable sense) is one main theme of these poems[1], written between the ages of sixty and eighty, as it is really of the prose books. The poems are a proper late flowering. There is a bleakness about some of them, a bleakness in confronting a cosmos, a society, an individual psyche, without an obvious *telos* or direction. We make history, history does not make us: all human sanities are very difficult, and perhaps excessively costly, balances between various types of apathetic stolidity and exciting delirium. The achievement of a great teacher—Richards is that—is often a failure to teach what one intended to teach, or a teaching what one did not intend to: fruitful misunderstanding. A democratic balance of impulses and authorities in the state, in the self, in a relationship like marriage, is very, very difficult, but, though continually defeated, worth striving for. Friendly nagging helps. The safe life is the non-mountaineering life, say, but the true climber or adventurer, needs—besides sudden daring—information, prudence, practice, caution. Tragedy has its triumphs: and carefully contrived success, or the intellectually arrogant claim that one has "pinned something down," may be the worst disaster. We never reach, but must always fear and not over-prepare for, the final test.

BUT ONE WOULDN'T sell Richards as a "wisdom-poet." The poems are too honestly self-searching and too disturbing to the reader: too full of cunning echoes and subtle rhythms; also, of art. They are very difficult poems, though the tone and the stanza patterns often remind one of poets one does not think of as difficult in this way, Hardy, even Walter de la Mare—a strange, queer "ghostiness". The volume has kept me awake all night before writing this review. It calls such a lot to "ghosty" things in oneself. A rough guide to the

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reader might be to look at Plato, Satan, mountains. The Platonic Socrates is always stretching one a bit beyond what one understands, or he, and confessing so; the recurrent Satan belongs a bit to Milton (there is a fine poem, written in Florida, on the beauty of the serpent) but also to Marlowe and the Book of Job: he is a tester rather than a tempter, fallen, but still divine; and the mountains to be climbed (they are there) are presented by one who knows all the tricks of climbing mountains. Oh, yes, and there is also the magic of words, which English reviewers have tended to ignore. I quote strange snatches:

And for that search we must be desolate. . . .

All feeling now like foliage to be shed.
Do you forget regret as well must fade?
Let go and let the loitering dead be dead.
Forget, forget. . . . Forget what you forget. . .

Go wrench his sense and regulate his voice.
Tell him there's nothing left for verse to say
Though only you can find the way to say it.
Give him my greeting with your rates of pay
And never let him know he has no choice. . . .

Come, cross yourself at the museum doors
Before you add yourself to the collection!

Eliot is reputed to have said of Richards, "*Ce n'est pas un copain!*" He should, as these not quite randomly chosen quotations show, be a chum of the few young (youngish, fortyish) poets who are still trying to write serious poetry in England today.

G. S. Fraser

The Monster as Critic

THE BEOWULF POET turned to folk-memory to illuminate the recurring tragicomedy of man's lot, and his poem was rich in myth—a world of dragons and heroes, of horrors lurking deep in caves and monsters striking in the night. He gave also his own shrewd view of men who were rather less than heroes, and monsters with uncomfortable hints of humanity. . . . John Gardner[1] regroups all these elements and makes the result his own: a splendid blend of ritual debunked and the growing pains of wisdom, despair and sanity-restoring comedy.

His hero is Grendel, the monster descended from Cain, dedicated to the persecution of Hrothgar and his Danish warriors. Grendel is no mere monster however: he is poet and clown, unwilling visionary and assertive cynic, savagely aware of the power and futility of words as he fights the annihilating acceptance of his utter loneliness. (Loneliness has already made his mother its ally in defeat, reducing her love for him to inarticulate smothering protectiveness.) The cold mechanics of the intuitive natural world he acknowledges with a shrug: men are his preoccupation. He sees their cold-blooded materialism as they leave exhausted horses to die, first stripping off the ornamented harness; their violence in the cause of honour and glory (they never eat their victims); their role-playing (he makes the gap between word and deed mouth its own message). He mimics and mocks his hall of men, clearsighted about their pettiness yet maddened by his sense of kinship. Life is at best, he decides, action and reaction—only tedium is wholly destructive. So he supplies violence as he watches—almost watches over—Hrothgar's growing patience and understanding of what peace could be; for it is vision, not fact, which inspires. Grendel can never come to terms with men's vision, the sincerity of it despite disillusioning realities. He can't, to his own disgust, bring himself to kill visionaries however inadequate, sparing king, poet, woman and priest—and, just for fun, would-be hero Unferth, since the man wants so much to die a martyr at his hands. In the end, he meets death characteristically, noisily determined to destroy the nameless Stranger, yet half-awed as he unwillingly recognises myth come alive and his ordained role as victim.

ALL THE TIME, alongside despair comedy is ever present: the dragon, for example, a kind of antigod in a universe of destructive energy, is simultaneously wise and senile, absurdly gracious and miserly. His exposition of foreknowledge and freewill is a triumph of politico-theological mumbo-jumbo.

Indeed, throughout the book Mr Gardner provides a fine medley of poetic phrase and workaday prosiness, heroic parody and pseudo-intellectual jargon—and in case we think the author too self-conscious an artist, Grendel holds up his creations in mock admiration, turning the jest against all word-weavers of worlds, including himself. For Grendel uses words, he says, to ward off the universe—but even as he derides, he too spins visions.

Mr Gardner's monster is altogether captivating, more than human in more ways than one. For the length of his history, tedium does not exist.

Elizabeth Maslen

[1] *Grendel.* By JOHN GARDNER. André Deutsch, £1.75.

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

27 Footnotes to Nabokov's Innocence

By William Woodin Rowe

"WHAT I OBJECT TO," wrote Mr Vladimir Nabokov in reviewing my book *Nabokov's Deceptive World,* "is Mr. Rowe's manipulating my most innocent words so as to introduce sexual 'symbols' into them."[1]

Hamlet's most carefree deliberations? Oblomov's most strenuous endeavours? It is difficult to match the ironic ring of Vladimir Nabokov's "most innocent words," One recalls that Ada and Van, after a night of ecstatic sex, finally return "to their innocent bedrooms."[2] There is also the humorous truth of Lolita's "virginal bed."[3] Let us examine a few of Mr. Nabokov's "most innocent words."

"Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins."[4] Humbert begins by praising Lolita quite diversely —or so it seems. Much later, at The Enchanted Hunters, he declares: "... less than six inches from me and my burning life, was nebulous Lolita!"[5] And, as they soon make love: "My life was handled by little Lo in an energetic, matter-of-fact manner as if it were an insensate gadget unconnected with me."[6]

The innocent opening phrase "light of my life" now seems decidedly more specialised. Here, Humbert continues: "... she was not quite prepared for certain discrepancies between a kid's life and mine." (In Nabokov's Russian translation of *Lolita,* we find: "... between a child size and mine."[7]) Still later, Miss Pratt emphasises "the attitudes" that young girls "will need in managing their lives and—as the cynic might add—the lives of their husbands."[8] ("Attitudes" is of course a pun.) Returning to Humbert's opening, we may conclude that the two luminous phrases are intended to be taken, within a larger context, in apposition: "light of my life, fire of my loins."

Humbert's furtive orgasm with Lolita in his lap (she clothed, he berobed) involves a similar euphemism: "... every movement she made ... helped me to improve the secret system of tactile correspondence between beast and beauty—between my gagged, bursting beast and the beauty of her dimpled body in its innocent cotton frock."[9] The sexual meaning of "beast" may be seen as a refinement of Shakespearean usage.[10] The analogous euphemism "beauty" seems somewhat more subtle, as was the female "life."[11] But the dual metaphor is sustained, much later, by Humbert's apparently abstract statement: "The beastly and beautiful merged at one point...."[12] Finally, when Lolita tells of refusing to practise fellatio upon Quilty's "boys," many readers—smiling at the French euphemism *"souffler"*—will probably not notice that she terms the boys "beastly."[13]

Nabokov's use of such "innocent" words can be almost unbelievably complex. Slyly postponing and prolonging the climax he enjoys with Lolita in his lap, Humbert expresses a fear of losing too soon "the golden load in the sensation of which all my being seemed concentrated...,"[14] The words "golden load" can of course refer to Lolita but can also playfully suggest the substance of Humbert's rising climax.[15] Lolita

[1] Vladimir Nabokov, "Rowe's Symbols," *The New York Review of Books* (7 October 1971), p. 8. As stated in my rejoinder, I did not discuss "symbols" nearly as exclusively as he deftly maintains. (*The New York Review of Books,* 18 November 1971, p. 46.)
[2] Vladimir Nabokov, *Ada* (1969), p. 122.
[3] Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* (1955), p. 186.
[4] *Lolita,* p. 11.
[5] *Lolita,* p. 132.
[6] *Lolita,* pp. 135–6.
[7] Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita* [in Russian] (New York, 1967), p. 119. The Russian reads: "... *mezhdu detskim razmerom i moim.*" In both versions, the youthful designation apparently refers to Lolita, but as we discover two pages later, it could perhaps even apply to Charlie Holmes.
[8] *Lolita,* pp. 179–80.
[9] *Lolita,* p. 61.
[10] See Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (1969), pp. 63–4.
[11] Drawing upon Poe's "Annabel Lee," Nabokov slyly combines both female euphemisms: Humbert terms Lolita "my life and my bride" (p. 49) and "my beauty and bride" (p. 125). In each phrase, the key word seems quite innocent of its darkly humorous association with "bride."
[12] *Lolita,* p. 137. "Down, poor beast, down," says Humbert soon after (p. 143). See also "the ancient beast in me" (p. 270).
[13] *Lolita,* p. 279.
[14] *Lolita,* p. 61.
[15] The sly colloquial pun "load" (burden or sperm) is quite typical; see, for example, "pop," p. 227. The sub-meaning of "load," however, is playfully undermined by the wording that follows: "...and this anxiety forced me to work, for the first minute or so, more hastily than was consensual with deliberately modulated enjoyment."

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later speculates, regarding camp, that she will have "loads of fun."[16] Finally she confesses to Humbert that she regularly had intercourse at camp with Charlie Holmes.

> Although conceding that it was "sort of fun" and "fine for the complexion," Lolita, I am glad to say, held Charlie's mind and manners in the greatest contempt. Nor had her temperament been roused by that filthy fiend. In fact, I think he had rather stunned it, despite the "fun."[17]

Repeated here, the word "fun" remarkably enlivens Lolita's innocent prediction "loads of fun," which typically sustains the colloquial submeaning of "golden load."[18]

Charlie, we read, " . . . had as much sex appeal as a raw carrot but sported a fascinating collection of contraceptives which he used to fish out of a third nearby lake, a considerably larger and more *populous* one, called Lake Climax, after the booming young factory town of that name."[19] Elsewhere I have suggested that since the contraceptives are presumably used ones, the word "populous" seems, with rather dark humour, especially appropriate.[20] I have also maintained that Lolita's "eye" can be seen to function continually as a sly sexual symbol. When Lolita passes Quilty off as a woman, for example, Humbert asks:

> "So she complimented you?"
> "Complimented my eye—she kissed me on my pure brow. . . ."[21]

Among other clues, it is the "*i*" in "complimented" that must be altered to complete the sexual metaphor ("complemented my eye"). Ten pages later, Humbert senses that Quilty is following them: "And all the time I was aware of a private blaze on my right: her joyful eye, her flaming cheek."[22] The "innocent" puns "private" and "cheek" support the "eye" metaphor, adding a sexual connotation to "private blaze."

Long before this, Humbert playfully mentions attempting to "liberate" himself from an "incomplete" sexual experience with Annabel on the seashore. But he gave up trying to possess Lolita there, he explains, because the beaches "were either too bleak when lone, or too populous when ablaze,"[23] Almost impossibly, the surface meaning of a crowded sunlit beach can be seen to cover a sub-meaning of nocturnal orgy, but this hidden meaning only becomes complete when "private blaze" later inter-echoes with "ablaze," which, in conjunction with "populous," humorously recalls Lolita's copulatings with Charlie.

Aspiring to innocence while creating such sly complexities can only be described, in Nabokovian tmesis, as having one's cheesecake and eating it too. For beneath the surface of Mr Nabokov's writing, there is a relentless lack of innocence. Ironic pre-figurings, suggestive inter-echoes, and sustained sub-meanings lurk throughout. In fact, each part seems subtly integral to a distinctive, pre-envisioned whole: "I always have at the very start a curiously clear picture of the entire novel before me or above me. . . ."[24] "I fill in the gaps of the crossword at any spot I happen to choose."[25] Nabokov has the future clearly in mind (or even on paper) while writing the present. Conversely, the careful reader is induced to remember the past while experiencing the present.

Describing his own memory, Mr Nabokov has claimed a great facility for recalling "a million sensuous details."[26] He has also suggested that "imagination is a form of memory."[27] Predicating a clear pre-vision of the entire work, Nabokov's creative method is thus a systematic recalling of separate but subtly inter-related images. And the process extends to individual details. Where sex is concerned—as it so often is—the calculated interaction between submeanings of apparently innocent words becomes almost diabolically complex.

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[16] *Lolita*, p. 74.
[17] *Lolita*, p. 139.
[18] Much later, Humbert quotes a Column for Teens advising parents not to frighten away their daughter's boyfriend: "Don't you want them to have wholesome fun together?" (p. 187). The partial pun "wholesome" and echoing euphemism "fun" are both typical. "Wholesome fun?" comments Humbert. "Good Lord!"
The word "happiness" in *King, Queen, Knave* repeatedly has a sub-meaning similar to that of "fun" shown above in *Lolita*. (See *Nabokov's Deceptive World*, N.Y.U. Press, 1971, pp. 99–100.)
[19] *Lolita*, p. 139. My italics.
[20] See my "Gogolesque Perception-Expanding Reversals in Nabokov," *Slavic Review* (March 1971), pp. 112–3.
[21] *Lolita*, p. 211.
[22] *Lolita*, p. 221.
[23] *Lolita*, pp. 169–70.
[24] "An Interview With Vladimir Nabokov" (conducted by Alfred Appel, Jr.), in: L. S. Dembo (ed.), *Nabokov: The Man and His Work* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1967), p. 24.
[25] Vladimir Nabokov, "The Art of Fiction," *The Paris Review* (Summer-Fall, 1967), p. 102.
[26] "Philip Oakes talks to Vladimir Nabokov," *The Times* (London, 22 June 1969), p. 52.
[27] "An Interview With Vladimir Nabokov," in Dembo, p. 32.

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From Anderson to Vaizey

The Unemployment Controversy — By E. J. Mishan

IN A SIGNED ARTICLE to mark his resignation as editor of *The Economist,* the late Lord Crowther warned economists against over-confidence in their ability to control aggregate changes in the post-War economy. The term *fine-tuning*, until recently so popular in the U.S., bears testimony to the self-deception among government officials of which Mr Samuel Brittan speaks. Today economists are agreed on the direction of the effect exerted on prices and employment by particular fiscal and monetary policies; but they are as yet uncertain of the timing and magnitude of the operations needed to bring about such changes with precision. They could perhaps prevent a prolonged period of unemployment comparable to that experienced in the 1930s. They could perhaps check a runaway inflation. But only the excessively innocent believe that the government can choose between a 2½% or 4% level of unemployment, between a 6% or an 8% rise in the price-level, or between a 2% or 5% growth rate. And if forecasting some aggregate figure within 1% looks impressive, it is only because the forecast is decidedly short term—the next three or six or 12 months. My forecast of the weather in five minutes' time is that it will be much the same as it is right now. My forecast of the economic climate at this time next week or month will follow the same pattern. But ask me to predict within 10% the GNP exactly 10 years from today, and I would not bet even money on it.

On two other issues raised also by Mr J. R. L. Anderson's provocative article [ENCOUNTER, November], I think there is fair agreement. There is certainly an astonishing shortage of labour in the old-fashion service trades—nurses, maids, handymen, etc. Yet the shortage cannot wholly be explained by relatively low wages. Certainly in most parts of the U.S. the "real" pay of a full-time maid exceeds that of a secretary or sales girl, and it is doubtful whether a 50% increase in wages or more would restore the pre-War situation in which every middle-class family had at least one servant. As Mr Patrick Hutber surmises, it is a question of status. For obscure reasons, the rendering of direct personal services in the home is today regarded as a lowly occupation while the routine of the office or sales-counter, the sharing of digs in some clamorous district of the metropolis, is associated with independence.

The facts bear out Mr James Griffiths' allegation of the boredom of modern work; and we all might agree that it all harks back to the beginning of the industrial revolution that transformed workers from craftsmen to machine-minders, one of the costs, in fact, of technological growth. According to an article in *Manpower*,[1] absenteeism has increased by as much as 100% in the past ten years in the American automobile industry. A recent survey revealed that of the five features rated as most important by both blue-collar and white-collar workers, "interesting work" was ranked above pay. Nearly one in four workers in service occupations and wholesale-retail industry expressed job-discontent; and manufacturing workers were not much happier.

Turning to Professor John Vaizey's fundamental question, "On what basis do we say who should do what and who should earn how much?"—we can all agree that we don't know. The days when the eminent economist J. B. Clark sought to justify the distributional outcome of a competitive economy are long past. Modern economists are more modest and seek only to explain the forces that shape it: the ethics are not properly part of their discipline. But if we do allow ourselves to speculate, we might conclude that a dispensation which accords with the economic concept of allocative merit is at variance with social justice. If we are moving into a world in which specialised knowledge is more important than property and therefore—because of the increasing accessibility of higher education—genetical inheritance will come to exceed material inheritance in determining wealth and status, the consequent distribution can hardly be justified on ethical considerations. Would not an even-handed justice seek to transfer wealth from Fortune's favourites, already gifted with intelligence and sensibility, in order to compensate those whose natural endowments are meagre—

[1] "Who's Unhappy at Work and Why", by Neal O. Herrick, *Manpower*, January 1972.

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and transfer it to the extent of creating an inverse relation between natural gifts and status, on the one hand, and wealth on the other?

ON THE THREE CLOSELY RELATED issues of Unemployment, Leisure, and Abundance, raised by Mr Anderson's article, there will be less agreement. On the first, Mr Hutber's forecast of a shortage of labour two years from now may well be vindicated; but I do not think it meets Mr Anderson's concern, which I interpret to be about the trend of employment over the next two or three decades. At all events, it is over the longer period that the distinction between voluntary and involuntary unemployment is relevant. If the definition of involuntary unemployment poses difficulties (as Mr Brittan suggests), the general concept is clear—clear enough at least to enable us to recognise that involuntary unemployment, whether among young or old, may be institutionally determined in less obvious ways than some economists concede. Thus Mr Hutber's distinction between (a) regional unemployment (sometimes connected with "structural" unemployment), (b) "disguised" unemployment (referred to as overmanning or featherbedding), and (c) "recessionary" unemployment, is not exhaustive, and invites comment.

The structural unemployment he might agree is partly a failure of public policy in bringing work to the worker. But this failure is not unrelated to the disguised unemployment that springs from trade union monopoly of which Mr Anderson makes so much; and I do not think we are bound to concur with Mr Brittan that it will make us all worse off "in the long run." The belief that it does so arises from the economist's bias that favours the convenience of the consumer at the expense of the worker. It arises, that is, from the idea that a good allocation mechanism is one that continually shifts resources (including labour) to meet changing consumer demand, and continually adapts resources (including labour) to meet technological innovation. The worker in such a system is somewhat of a residual legatee, and is expected to compensate himself for losses endured in moving and adapting himself to a consumer-dominated economy from the proliferation of goods. But workers might rationally prefer to slow down this uncomfortable process of adaptation to the dictates of the market. They might rationally choose to support their monopoly unions even though this hinders more than it helps the working of the price mechanism and the productive process. Besides which, the range of activities the unions engage in can be a source of satisfaction to the workers they represent. These activities cover job-definition, work rules, vacations, rest breaks, locker-room facilities, the regulation of new technical processes, sick leave, and the provision of medical and legal services. In an increasingly anonymous society, they promote a sense of security, solidarity, and identity among large groups of workers—things that rising levels of affluence alone cannot give them.

Hutber's "recessionary" unemployment—which he alleges was "caused by the failure of the British economy to grow over the past five years at any acceptable rate"—is not a distinct and recognised type of unemployment, but rather a phenomenon that is explained by Mr Hutber's interpretation of events. Since, in general, a high level of employment is consistent with slow or even zero growth, and growth in productivity is consistent with high or low levels of employment, some outline of the mechanism and the special circumstances by which low growth rates were translated, in Britain, into low employment would be necessary in order to establish the connection.

BEFORE THE WAR, and for a decade after, the unemployment most feared was that which, following the theories of Lord Keynes, arose from a deficiency of aggregate demand. This was the basis of Alvin Hansen's stagnation thesis, and when Mr Brittan talks of the bogey of satiation it might be as well to include the possibility of a chronic deficiency of over-all demand as one manifestation. To be sure, the idea of receiving regular and dependable packets of notes in the post has its appeal; but to the economist the concept of satiation need have no essential affinity with a zero marginal utility of goods. If no matter how income is redistributed and how low interest rates fall, aggregate demand cannot be maintained except by growing budget deficits, then can we not talk of satiation in some relevant sense? If aggregate demand can be maintained only by vast expenditures on advertising, can we not also talk of satiation in some relevant sense? And what if a substantial proportion of the goods consumed are not "needed"? In the *Harvard Business Review* (May–June 1971), a poll of business executives themselves elicited the fact that 85% of them thought that advertising *often* persuades people to buy things they don't need—and, in the opinion of 51%, things they don't even want.

There is, finally, another kind of involuntary unemployment which we are prone to evade: sheer unemployability on a large scale. With advances in automation and the increased versatility of the computer it is more than just possible that skilled as well as routine tasks in industry will soon be taken over by the machine. There will remain only the more complex tasks such as servicing and producing elaborate

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mechanisms, tasks which the ordinary worker may be innately incapable of learning. Mr Hutber and Professor Vaizey might reply that such technological advances will indeed displace workers, but they will move into service industries. They might also argue that this is a good thing. Now, nobody will deny that there is a relation between the level of prosperity and the proportional size of the service industry. But he will not want to deny either that there can be periods during which many more workers are discarded than can be taken up by the expanding service industries. Granted that wages remain sticky, we cannot rule out the possibility of severe unemployment in the near future arising from such causes.

The view that life is made more agreeable in proportion as the service industries expand is arguable. Professor Vaizey points out that there are more people working in hotels in England than are working down the mines. I fail to see why this is an improvement. I tend rather to approve of Mr James Griffiths' initial impulse to recoil from the idea of his native village, "with its rich community life, turned into a soulless suburb." There are vital aspects of life that increasing affluence cannot buy back since they are destroyed in the process of producing that affluence. All "mod cons" is not synonymous with the good life.

AND THIS BRINGS US BACK to the much-touted service industries. Communications, travel, higher education, recreation, all involve large amounts of physical capital and inputs; and all impose high costs on society that are not captured by the price system. The complex and ubiquitous spillover effects of automobile and airline travel are too painfully familiar to require mention. The expansion of higher education is increasingly specialised, vocational, not humanistic; and it has gone too far. Physicists, as well as sociologists, are in excess supply in the West, especially in the U.S. According to a recent paper in *The American Economic Review*, the social rate of return on the investment needed to transform an American graduate at the Master's level into a Ph.D. graduate is less than one per cent. Large numbers of narrowly trained specialists, unable to find suitable employment in the foreseeable future, will surely add to the sources of social instability.

THE BIGGEST MYTH OF ALL, however, is that growing affluence will provide the masses with the leisure necessary to enjoy "the good things of life." Over the post-War period there has been no substantial decline in the hours of work even in the world's wealthiest country, the U.S.A. During my frequent visits to New York City, I have yet to meet the cab driver who is not in the business as an extra job in order to make ends meet. Part of the explanation is to be found in Stefan Linder's entertaining recent book, *The Harried Leisure Classes*. As productivity rises, time becomes more precious; and Americans in particular drive themselves frantic thinking of ways of saving time, or of using it to advance their prospects by further study or work. For executives and professionals, business is now done over organised breakfasts, lunches, and at dinners where hospitality need no longer be wasted on single guests. Another factor promoting the frenzy is the profusion of gadgetry and leisure goods that are expensive (causing people to work harder) and are unavoidably time-consuming (leaving less time for relaxation). Tennis, skiing, snowmobiling, sailing, golf, speedboating, water skiing, gliding, fishing, camping, flying, all require increasingly expensive equipment and, of course, vaster public facilities for their enjoyment. They entail travel by automobile or airplane, often for hours, and cause congestion on highways and ill-humour among drivers when millions are on the move, all simultaneously and vainly trying to get away. Rapid erosion of the world's limited stock of natural beauty is one of the unavoidable consequences.

Whether we are thinking of service industries or of physical output, the potential for continued and increasing abundance, which Professor Vaizey does not doubt, has of course been challenged repeatedly over the last five years by agronomists, biologists, ecologists, economists, and others. This literature is so extensive that Professor Vaizey's views are far from being representative and can stand only as a record of his personal conviction. As he and others are aware, there is also a growing literature that doubts also whether the traditional presumption in favour of sustained economic growth can be convincingly argued. But more of that in a forthcoming article in these pages.

J. R. L. Anderson

I AM AT ONCE impressed and gratified by the readiness of economists (at least of those who contribute to ENCOUNTER) to consider eccentric ideas. And since today's heresy often turns out to be tomorrow's doctrine, it is comforting (as well as much less painful) to the heretic to have a hearing instead of being confined automatically to the pillory.

But *has* unemployment a future, and, if so, what? The title given to my article in November

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was not mine, so I can fairly admit that I think it brilliant. Of course, short of instant atom-bombing, every human institution must have a future of some sort. But "future" in this context implies (properly) more than a merely temporal succession. When the speculator buys futures, he hopes for gain: Is there human gain to be sought in what is called unthinkingly "unemployment"?

Every economist seems to accept that what is called "Full employment" isn't, and can never be. The political argument turns on what level of unemployment can be regarded as "acceptable" and pushed under the carpet of national policy—2%, 4%, 6%, or whatever. Then—a good point made by Professor Mishan—there are the unemployable, a growing number of the dull, the neurotic and the incompetent who are unable, or permanently unwilling, to cope with the complexities of modern industrial society. To write off some proportion of each generation as foredoomed to useless idleness, however "acceptable" this proportion may be to the more comfortably situated, seems to me both morally wrong and the negation of sane economic planning. The once-comforting belief in "human progress" is now unfashionable. But if it is demonstrably false to hope that mankind will somehow "progress" automatically, it does *not* follow that efforts to bring about improvement in the human lot should also be abandoned. Whether we like it or not, we have got to live with Unemployment, on (I believe) an increasing scale. Why not determine, consciously, *to give it a future*—to make freedom from the *necessity* of work a desirable phase of human existence?

IN ANOTHER CONTEXT RECENTLY I happened to consult the *Index Biblicus Doctrinalis* that is included in my edition of the Vulgate. Turning to "Labor," I found:

LABOR—*sumitur pro mendacio, crimine, malo quocumque*. That is the *first* definition of "Labor"—work as a penalty inflicted for falsehood, crime, or any other evil action. Not everyone will share this definition of human work as a punishment for the sins of Adam (with deference to Women's Lib, perhaps even more for the sins of Eve); and I do not argue it myself. But there is at least respectable philosophical tradition that work in itself is not a natural human good, and that life without the *necessity* of working is an ideal of some merit. The task, then, is not to run away from Unemployment, or to pretend that it doesn't exist because it is agreed that $x\%$ of unemployment doesn't count, but to accept it as a desirable human state for some period of every man's life, to plan its financing so that to be without work does not mean forfeiting human dignity.

Mr Patrick Hutber argues, "Nothing is crueller, nothing kills off more surely, than the premature retirement of fit men." With respect to Mr Hutber, I suspect that he is not here thinking of "retirement" but of the poverty and boredom that frequently do *but need not* accompany retirement. Many a tired man in his late fifties stays at his workbench or office desk not because he loves it, but because he cannot contemplate life for his family on the pittance of State aid or reduced occupational pension that is all he can hope for if he retires early. Remove this fear of poverty, and retirement takes on a wholly different colour! No one commenting on my article seems to have noticed my plea for more Homer and less occupational training in education, but it was not made idly. I shall occupy my own old age (if granted it) by making my own translation of Catullus—not that the world needs another translation of Catullus, but simply because putting his Latin into English is something that gives me intense pleasure and mental stimulus. For *Catullus* read: the cultivation of cacti, the study of racing pigeons, the making of tapestry, anything you like. It is surely the utter failure of our society that men have nothing *in themselves* to occupy their time, and to give them an identity, if they cannot have a paid physical job.

I AM SADDENED by the computer-like response of Mr Samuel Brittan (whom I have long admired) to my suggestions for a new concept of National Service. Say "National Service" in certain sections of traditional liberal society and their collective computer spits back "Blimp. . . . discipline. . . . bad man" etc. I don't think Mr Brittan really believes this, anyway—he has much too acute a mind. He has just allowed the collective computer to think for him. If the tendencies of modern society promote greater leisure (as it seems to me they *must*) the jobs and services on which the community depends will *still* need doing. Should they be done by using labour as a penal sanction? Why not, instead, dignify the whole concept of service? Just as Mr Hutber is not really thinking of "retirement" when he calls "premature retirement" cruel, so Mr Brittan is not thinking of service when he inveighs against National Service.

Mr James Griffiths is right. Remove the penury from being out-of-work, and boredom *in work* is a more dreadful human disease than unemployment. Let the computers, which are immune to boredom, do the boring tasks—and let us encourage the human beings whom they displace to learn to live. Society *can* give unemployment a future if it wills it so.

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CHESS

Reflections after Reykjavik

By Gerald Abrahams

'The Board has been compared to a battle field, and the two sets of pieces (White and Black) to contending armies. That comparison is a useful one to bear in mind because, in learning Chess, the average reader will find himself in contact with players and writers who think in terms of attack and defence, threats, manoeuvres for position, captures, ambushes (traps as they are sometimes called) and many other terms suggesting combat. Eventually he will himself absorb, and act upon, notions which are of the first importance in war and other modes of activity, as well as in Chess: for example, the notion of strategy and the related notion of tactics. From elementary ideas such as capturing and recapturing, advance and retreat, he will proceed to think in terms of strongpoints, blockade, tempo and general development. In the light of these accumulating notions he will be able to assess the real forces underlying threats and parades of strength. While doing this he will gradually be acquiring a control over affairs, and learning that the real opposition consists in nothing other than the limits of the material and his own limitations—his lack of confidence or of capacity; and at the end of his development he will discover, as every good General does, that he has mastered not only an opponent, but a Science. . . .'

TEACH YOURSELF CHESS (1948)

JOURNALISM is the study of the irrelevant. Through that too bright glass, which when focused disturbs the concentrator on essentials as sorely as the television lights disturbed Bobby Fischer, everything trivial is aggrandised, everything insignificant given a value. Over there, at "the battle of Reykjavik", there was no dearth of trivia. As Browning might have asked, "Who fished up that maroon suit? What breakfast had the Russ?" In that novel context a plethora of irrelevancies scattered itself around for grubmen to devour and regurgitate; just like mistakes on the chess board, waiting there to be made.

What were they watching? A ballet or a bullfight? To the puristic chess player (the adjective should be pleonasm) all that mattered was the procession of moves, expressive of ideas latent among the pieces until revealed. To others (including some chess player-journalists, enjoying remission from the discipline of relevance which scientific chess imposes) the ballet of ideas was too bloodless. There, in the land of the Eddas (incidentally one of the oldest homes of chess) they projected heroic epic. They declared chess to be a War Game. So it was once; so once was War. But nowadays War Game is a misnomer, unless the user of the phrase appreciates that the Charge of the Light Brigade is not war, and that armies are not ignorant when they clash by night.

Yet, in the lively oracles of the world press, we were shown Might campaigning against Right, or Right against Left—strange analogies for a couple of hard-working Jewish boys "doing the best they could." Incidentally, they and their companions, coming from Brooklyn and Moscow to Iceland, constituted the first large-scale Jewish immigration in the history of the island.

TO THE IGNORANT ARMIES of unsophisticated spectators here were events that suggested battlefield and bullring. Evidently inspired by Fischer, the very Government of Iceland found itself intensifying its fisheries war. Of the reporters, those who should know better confirmed illusions by making it appear that degrees of personal aggressiveness could determine the movements of thought in a series of some twenty or more scientific attempts at the optimum coordination of pieces on a chess board.

Fischer's play was described as "relentless" and "ruthless." This is a splendid example of what Ruskin called "The Pathetic Fallacy", as when the would-be poet speaks of the "cruel Sea" or the "kindly Vales." Chess moves are effective or ineffective. A chess move is not cruel when it is good; nor is a bad move intended as an act of kindness. (I remember a fine player—admittedly neurotic—complaining to me that his opponent persisted in making bad moves, and he thought this very unkind.)

That good player and *Times* reporter, Harry Golombek, has read much, but perhaps not Ruskin. He, descending from Mount Hecla to Brooklyn, declared that "good guys are not champions." Perhaps this "good guy" (and I know him as such) was trying to explain to himself why he is not the title-holder. (He will admit that there may be other reasons.) However, when this banal epigram was challenged in the names of Lasker, Rubinstein, Reshevsky, Botvinnik, Smyslov, Tal and Spassky (Fischer was not omitted), *The Times* did not print the letter.[1]

[1] Of great players the only established "bad guy" is the Czarist officer, Alexander Alekhine, whose avoidance of a return match with Capablanca is history. His character stands exposed by the gentlemanly conduct of Max Euwe, who, having won against an "off-form" Alekhine, made no difficulties about granting a return match (which he knew he could lose). (Euwe, happily still with us, showed his humanity in Iceland.)

Alekhine consolidated his reputation by selling himself to the Nazis. He wrote *Stürmer*-type articles to show how the Jews had "ruined" chess.

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Chess, which is a science of the relevant—everything that journalism is not—was purveyed as news to the avid spectators of meaningless spectacle. These were determined to see a bullfight; and they clothed with appropriate trappings one who was never a bull and another who was never a matador. In fairness, it should be added that Fischer cooperated, away from the board, by baiting FIDE, baiting Iceland, baiting the Soviet Union, attacking the TV promoters, and conducting a first-class war against himself. But the metaphor of the bullring loses everything when one realises that never at any stage was Fischer hostile to Spassky; whom, in fact, he has always admired.

I permit myself to add, before considering the relevance of behaviour (including the psychotic) to chess, that at no stage was Fischer opposed to Spassky or Spassky to Fischer. Let this not be regarded as an obscure precept in a dark glass. Real chess is an approach to an ideal.

The ideal of chess would be realised if a computer worked out the ultimate results of every possible move made on the board and showed how those results were obtained. One difficulty is—a fortuitous one—that the operation would take a million years. Another is that we need the special stimulus of inter-player competition. Meanwhile the division of the pieces into two sets, the handling of those two sets by two players, and the fact that these players operate competitively against each other, combine to create an atmosphere of conflict. But when we analyse the chess process in the chess-player's mind, we are likely to discover little which resembles conflict, but rather a sort of scientific cooperation in which the only results that matter are scientific results. Yet not all players are aware of their function. They are Scientists without knowing they are scientific. When Botvinnik was asked: "What is Chess—an Art or a Science?" he replied, "Chess is a sport." This remark puts Botvinnik into the family of Mrs Goldberg. ("Mrs Goldberg, what is by you a tomato? Is it a vegetable or is it a fruit?" "By me, gentlemen, a tomato is an extra.") At least Botvinnik did not say that chess was "a game." It is not. This truth is evident in the life of the small boy who starts with chess pieces as toys, and, when he discovers their immanent life, ceases to be a small boy and becomes an adult.

When Mason wrote of the Art of Chess, he was using the word "art" to mean skill or craft. The artist, as he creates, is relatively free in his imaginative use of raw materials. The scientist, and I would include here the chess player, is severely controlled by his material. Both have ideas; ideas float into their minds and guide their movements. But the poet may derive his ideas from dreamland; not so the chess player. It is a far cry from the realms of Kubla Khan to the board of Caro Kahn.

IT MAY BE OBJECTED that in this match both players produced movements that are describable as "beautiful," There is, certainly, an aesthetic experience in following the movements of the pieces. One writer has found a "Mozart symphony" in one of the games. Let him continue so to describe it, if he is prepared to concede that the match between Capablanca and Alekhine was orchestrated by Beethoven. The beauties of chess are in the emotions of the beholder. The dénouement gave pleasure and surprise to the spectator—including the player. But the player was not striving after aesthetic effects—that would be bad chess. He was only concerned to use his material scientifically towards his purpose.

The use by many people of the term "Art" in application to chess is explained by the circumstances that chess is not an "exact Science", as mathematics and astronomy are exact. (That chess is "not mathematical" I hold to be platitude.) Chess is comparable to the inexact empirical sciences (sometimes called "arts", in the sense of crafts), *e.g.* engineering, clinical medicine, some fields of chemistry, etc. Because chess is inexact—because to the vision of the player (and vision is his faculty) the board is not always translucent, is more usually opaque, concealing fields of chance—there is scope for judgment. There is also scope for style and there is scope for varieties of excellence. These differences enhance the impression of conflict between players. But as chess approaches asymptotically its scientific ideal, opponents (in the sense of "belligerents") become unimportant. It is as if two engineers were tunnelling through an Alp. Each is opposed only by the thickness of the mountain and the thinness of his tools. So the chess player has no opposition other than the inherent difficulties of the subject matter and the limitations of his own mind. The opponent's moves are relevant as possibilities which he must anticipate and control, and frequently fails to anticipate and control. The opponent embodies the task. But the opponent is not an ordinary adversary. In chess there is no adversary comparable to the bull or a boxer in a ring, to a batsman, a bowler, a centre-forward, or a goalkeeper. Two persons are operating on the same board: each playing his private game against himself. As each one loses, he blames, not the other, but himself. Not protagonist and antagonist here, but (a semantically unique case) two protagonists, each accidentally helping to constitute a test for the mental adequacy of the other.

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So it is in my theory. As to practice, I only know one great player who behaved as if chess was completely "objective." That was Akiva Rubinstein—a talmudist turned chess player. He has been called "the Spinoza of Chess." But if you told this to the average super grandmaster (who has no metaphysics in his mind or music in his soul), he would ask "What tournaments did Spinoza win? . . ."

In Iceland we saw play and conduct which call for an inquiry into the psychological factors operating in chess. Ideally, chess is a manifestation of pure intellect, and that player wins whose intellect is clearest and most inventive. But below that level we live in a world where the intellectual process contains impurities; where personal factors are manifest, some of which can collectively be described in a phrase which I use in defiance of the behaviourists, "Will Power." Simply stated, will power is something that concentrates the neuro-physical in support of the mental—makes the mind work hard. The classical case of the relevance of will power is seen in the match between Capablanca and Alekhine. Capablanca came to that match confident; and his confidence was destroyed in that tragic first game, when it was borne in on him that he had become lazy, and that he would not quickly recover his full powers against that creature of controlled neurosis and disciplined megalomania which was Alekhine.

THE MENTION OF THAT MATCH conjures the question implicit in the description given to the Fischer-Spassky games as "the Match of the Century." To anyone who maintains that this was "the greatest chess match ever played" I would reply in the words of the Latin poet: that there were heroes before Agamemnon, but they were condemned to oblivion because they had no publicity.

The criterion of merit in chess is suggested by a note of Alekhine's to a superb game by Capablanca; that he had made a slight error of judgment, but that no chess player can win a game unless his opponent gives him a chance. I elicit from this the proposition that a great game of chess is one in which (*inter alia*) the loser's error is very slight and the victor's exploitation sustained and convincing. This standard was reached between Morphy and Anderssen, certainly between Lasker and Capablanca, between Alekhine and Capablanca, and in a few of the games in which Botvinnik defended his title and recaptured it. It follows also from Alekhine's observation that we are likely to find some of the best chess in drawn games; and that was confirmed in Iceland.

The Fischer match was not "the greatest ever", at least not in the sense of pure chess, because although there were some splendid exploitations of error most of the errors were greater than one expects from world champions.

THIS MUCH CAN BE CONCEDED: the match was probably "the most human" chess contest that has ever been staged. Fischer, starting in the grip of a nervous breakdown, handicapped himself as no world contestant has ever done, Until we have his own notes, nobody will be sure why he incurred loss in the first game. There are many theories. Some think that he missed a Zwischenzug some seven moves ahead in a line involving P-R6. (Fischer missed a shorter-range Zwischenzug in game 14.) There is another theory that he had planned a grouping of black pawns on g4 and h3, but that the discovery of a long-distance refutation may have caused him to change his play. A third line of thought is that his conception of King play was sound, but that he went wrong at a later stage.

The *patzers* of the world are content to think that he overlooked the loss of a bishop, and so there is hope for all of them. Fischer's play was probably too hastily initiated: and there was lack of wisdom in his not being content with a draw in the first round. Some would say: he was unwise not to be content with a draw when he was playing the black pieces. As to that let me say that one of the things I like about Fischer's chess is that he seems to share my own belief that black is a good colour. Certainly two of the finest games in this match, the third and the thirteenth, were won by Fischer playing black. Spassky only won with white, although he appears to have missed one win with black.

Having sacrificed a piece in the first round, Fischer went further, and in the second round sacrificed the whole game. Tartakover, who had once pronounced *"Il ne faut jamais s'handicaper"* must have turned in his grave. Bobby, however, notwithstanding his now evident failure to "take him in thirteen", came to the board (rather late) in the third round and produced a masterpiece. He seemed detached, somnambulistically, from all that had gone before.

The famous Kt-R4 in that game may have seemed to Spassky to be a gamble; but there was profound and original thought involved in it. One is reminded of that fact that the immortal attack with which Fischer, playing black, defeated Donald Byrne nearly 20 years ago, commenced with a sacrificial Kt-R5. If Fischer has a style, under his versatility, it seems to be characterised by clever knight play, and there was plenty in this match. In this respect he resembles Alekhine rather than Capablanca. This third game is one-sided because Spassky

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did not realise, until it was too late, that Fischer was planning a heavy attack on white's King's Pawn.

In this game Fischer gave the friendly critic many reasons for admiration. First, he showed that chess strategy can be dynamic: not only knowing what to do when there is nothing to do; but a line of thought in which the tactics and the shaping of the game are integrated in purposeful play, involving a clear vision of long and subtle variations. This is great chess.

Secondly, he showed that a colossal memory does not prevent a player from being original. Players like Rubinstein and Alekhine remembered everything; yet their vision was always fresh and rich in imaginative speculation. Spassky, too, has memory and independence of memory; but he manifested, in the long run, a lesser degree of creativity. He played some of his finest chess only under the pressure of tremendous attack—when memory of the past could offer no assistance.

INDEED, ONE OF THE MERITS of this match consists precisely in its availability as a text for a sermon on Memory in chess. Many World Championships have seemed to consist of repetitions of well-known lines of play with experiments in deviation late in the play. In this match, many games proceeded on book lines even unto the twentieth move. But both players were demonstrating at all times that there can be originality in the familiar; and that they were the masters of the known variations, not their servants. Fresh schemes were in being before and after the opening stages were concluded.

One truth about chess is that memory is more likely to be a handicap than an advantage. There comes a stage in every game when the player has to find, not what Botvinnik decided years ago, but what he now is called upon to play. Then, if he has been too reliant on memory, he will fail to produce the ideas that constitute bright chess. The windows of his mind are curtained to exclude ideas from floating in. His vision will be limited because he has not sufficiently exercised it. Because of their independence, players like Fischer and Spassky (and they are not the only ones) are convincing refuters of Capablanca's pessimistic pronouncement, forty years ago, that chess would soon be "played out."

PARADOXICALLY WE OWE the continued life and colour of chess to the monochrome Soviet world. Players like Bronstein, Keres, Tal, and Spassky (to name only the leaders) have played combatively—they would say, in the spirit of their father-figure Tchigorin, but more accurately in the spirit of Lasker.

Fischer is said to think badly of Lasker. But I permit myself to suggest that he showed Laskerian qualities in two ways: first, in his readiness to accept any offer of material; second (and this is necessitated by the first) in his extraordinary powers of defence against heavy attack, and his ability to emerge with advantage. Perhaps he drove on beyond visibility, but his judgment was always superb.

There are, roughly, two ways of trying to win at chess. The tradition of Morphy, Steinitz, Capablanca and Rubinstein is to develop well and subtly, seizing very slight initiatives, converting them to advantages and the advantages into victory. Like "unheard melodies", the *Sturm und Drang* are in the mind only. The other method, the method of Lasker and Alekhine, is to unbalance the game, bringing about skirmishes and hard fighting. There the great combinations are more frequently visible.

One does not wish to dogmatise about the style of so versatile a player as Fischer. But no one can doubt that, on the chess board, even more than in chess politics, he is always looking for a fight.

WHEN LASKER PLAYED experimental chess against Tarrasch, it was said by a fine player (Reti)—descending into journalism—that he was "playing the man, not the board". This was total misunderstanding. But the thought justifies reflection.

Even below the level of ideal chess, good players play the board. A good player will not speak of "laying a trap" for an opponent. He makes a move to which he sees that his opponent cannot make the obvious reply on account of some quite hard-to-see possibility. But he will never make the second best move merely because it gives an opponent an easy chance of error. Good players always make the move that they think to be the best, and they assume that an opponent will not make mistakes.

Nevertheless, in less-than-ideal chess personal factors are not completely irrelevant. Each player knows the type of position in which his opponent is likely to be most at ease; and that thinking may well determine opening play. In point are the efforts of Spassky to cope with Fischer's desire for Queen's Knight's Pawns. *The Times*, having adopted headline thinking, produced a leader under the caption "The Case of the Poisoned Pawn." (It does not qualify as an Erle Stanley Gardner.) The history is that when Fischer had successfully captured a Knight's Pawn and "got away with it", Spassky tried again. It is not known whether he convened a Sanhedrin of super-grandmasters in order to determine whether that pawn was kosher for eating, or whether, in the course of the game, he just discovered a good move. (The move referred

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to is not difficult to see. One is surprised that Fischer was surprised by it.) That particular game was a good victory for Spassky, who showed that he still knew how to turn an advantage into victory.[2]

Other personal factors worth mentioning include Fischer's high speed of play. Occasionally he made errors, but he always kept himself out of time-trouble. In this respect he is to be contrasted with that other prodigy, Reshevsky. Reshevsky, a lightning player of genius, is also a perfectionist, and he uses time extravagantly in search of the ultimately good move. The consequent *Zeitnot* has cost him the World Championship at least once.

Capablanca expressed the opinion that nobody needs more than an hour for 20 moves.... Spassky, in contrast with Fischer, was frequently in time-trouble. Is there, then, a difference between chess minds, sufficient to account for differences of speed of play? The difference, I suggest, is not between capacities, but in the use of capacities. When a good player looks at the board, he experiences a *Gestalt*. He does what no computer will ever do. In one act he apprehends the relevant and excludes the irrelevant (as the sculptor sees the figure in the marble). Along lines of possibility he intuits changes, during which what was not relevant once may become relevant. He apprehends moves near and far. Some of the proximate possibilities can be difficult to see because they involve deviations from logical process—unexpected sacrifices, for example. Most of these things the good player sees in one glance. Almost instinctively he knows his next move. That is what Capablanca meant when, in answer to the question "How far do you see ahead?" he replied: "One move." But not all situations are translucent to the best players. Here we see differences in the degree to which players rely on judgment. The player who gets into time-trouble is one who endeavours to turn the decision of judgment into a perfect analysis. (At lower levels much time is merely wasted, on Parkinson principles; and much of it is spent not in thought but in regret.)

Fischer is one player who shows—and that in two ways—that he relies confidently on his judgment. He shows it by his speed. He also shows it when, within distances which are within vision, he makes occasional mistakes. At his best his capacity for work at the board is sufficient to make those errors into rarities.

Consistently, Fischer's notion of chess is something played at the board then and there. Although he analyses during adjournments (this has long since ceased to be regarded as "bad practice"), he resents the idea of assistance from other persons. Some here called this attitude conceit. Well, he is entitled to "a good conceit of himself."

In contrast, Spassky—whom nobody can accuse of any lack of sportsmanship—did avail himself at nights of the illumination of a number of super-stars who surrounded him. In doing this he was following a practice which I, for one, deplore. For all my scientific ideals of chess, I hold that, while it is being competitively played, each man should win or lose on his unsupported merits.

CHESS HAS NOT BEEN a game to which adventitious aids have been helpful. Learning there has been; but it can conveniently be forgotten. There is nothing in chess to compare with, say, the increase in speeds at which Olympic runners run. There is no concept of a 4-minute mile in chess; and there is no physical training such as increases the vocal range of operatic singers. Only one development has taken place comparable to the reputed addition of some Olympic athletes to drugs. That development is consultation during adjournments. The chess world owes it to Fischer that he demonstrated that one man can beat many. While they burnt midnight oil in front of an ikon of Tchigorin, he went to the bowling alley, leaving his lonely second—a Catholic priest—to pray for him. (I wonder whether they think in Rome that Father Lombardy defeated the "godless Communists.")

The match was also intensely stimulating—fascinating at the emotional level. The gods favour the winning cause, but an occasional Cato was concerned about Spassky. Not because he lost—that was expected. But would this splendid man, well-known for his freedom of utterance against Soviet practice, suffer if he lost? For my part I think better of the Russians. Their attitude to chess is relatively objective. They will not deprive Spassky of his status. But, possibly, there will be less caviar for this general.

BOBBY FISCHER devoted some 15 years of hard effort in order to achieve the position of challenger for the World Championship. At more

[2] It was also interesting to notice that when Fischer, playing P-K4, had encountered very good play by Spassky in the Sicilian, he temporarily changed over to a Queen's Pawn opening (the "English", very popular in Russia). One was reminded of Capablanca's abandonment of the King's Pawn after his first loss. But Fischer, perhaps after a night of research away from the bowling alley, later resumed the King's Pawn: and one of the great games of the match was his Ruy Lopez (Spassky being now suspicious of Sicilian). Meanwhile when Fischer played the English on the first occasion, Spassky showed surprise in surprising weakness. The result was a game beautifully played by Fischer, but falling short of perfection precisely because the opponent's opening play had been weak. It is also noteworthy that Fischer, famous for King's Indian, in this match played Nimzovitch.

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than one stage (notably at Sousse) he sacrificed chances. Eventually, as he approached Reykjavik, he seemed to be behaving as if he were prepared to abandon his status, like a player resigning a won game. Some hold that he was bluffing. It is more consistent with his biography that he was taking risks. Many of his demands were reasonable. The cameras (and the whirling wheels of television and cinema photography) are calculated to affect concentration. Money is also an important issue when a man realises that here and now he must establish his financial position. These things being said, it still appears that he took hair-raising risks. Consequently, the psychiatrists of the world (including many irresponsible publicists) have been attributing to Fischer pathological characters: megalomania, persecution mania, monomania (in fact, every mania except nymphomania). And they seek for evidence of mental abnormality in his play.

I do not think that Fischer's "abnormalities" extend to the degree that is conventionally called madness. His mode of life is an unhappy one: a life spent in hotel rooms without open windows; a life precluding him from normal social experience; the life of a dragon who has settled in a pool at the risk of being tormented by newts. This is not the best training for the achievement of a well-balanced personality. A man who could be a happy extrovert makes himself into an unhappy introvert. But I would not say that "that way madness lies."

When Fischer comes to the board, after all the alarums and excursions, and plays exceptionally good chess, the dogmatic psychiatrist may say; "There is something pathological (schizoid) about this intellectual-emotional polarity." But the important fact that we know from chess history is that you cannot draw psychological conclusions from the play of a chess master. Perhaps the truth was most clearly stated in 1911. Rubinstein, while playing at San Sebastian, was under the impression that a fly was crawling across his scalp. After he had won the tournament brilliantly, Mieses took him to Munich to a local savant. The man examined Rubinstein with German thoroughness, and pronounced with Teutonic crudeness: "My friend, you are mad—but that is of no consequence—you're a chess player." The sequel is that though, over 15 years later, Rubinstein (in the grip of agoraphobia) retired into a sanatorium, his chess powers had shown no diminution; and when he emerged two decades later he was still a great player.

Good chess players are well represented in the best asylums. At the time when Torre decided to take his clothes off in the streets of Buenos Aires, he was playing chess of the highest order. Steinitz used to claim to be mad—long before his chess powers diminished. But most interesting of all is Morphy, the greatest American before Fischer. Morphy came to Europe in the 1850s and astonished the world with his chess virtuosity. In the history of chess no one has played better. But he was already in a psychotic state; and when he was thwarted by the refusal of Howard Staunton (a famous Shakespearian scholar) to "cry havoc", Morphy retired to a nursing home in Boston where he spent the rest of his life. There he continued to play excellent chess, albeit against opponents lower than the European order.

CHESS, ACCORDING to Dr Ernest Jones, is a War Game. In it people express their belligerence. In it are canalised the anal-sadistic elements in the psyche. (He does not refer to *Sitzfleisch*.) Morphy, according to Jones, was possessed by a father-hate not without perversion. In chess it was sublimated; and his chess was confident. That confidence was destroyed when hostile men like Staunton resurrected the father-hate, and thus filled him with the sense of guilt which is the remorse for anal-sadistic impulses and wishes.

Strange doctrine this, and difficult to equate with the fact that Morphy never lost any confidence in his play. Dimly conscious of the failure of relevance in his teaching, Dr Jones makes an effort as perverse as any conduct attributed by the exponents of guilt to the innocent. He endeavours to show that Morphy's psyche was manifest in his play. Uninhibited by any chess ability, Jones pointed to one of Morphy's early games against his father, and commented obscenely on the attack against the King from the rear. Not a good description, this, of what happened in the game: and it can be exposed as absurd by any player who studies the moves and finds Morphy's play to be the attack that was called for in the position. It was good play, unguilty of homosexuality or incest.

But the chess board, like the Bible, is *liber in quo quaerit sua dogmata quisque*. Inspired by Ernest Jones, psychologists still think they can find, in chess moves, symbols indicative of psychosomatic lesion.

You can do that to a poet. It has been done to Shakespeare. Blake and Coleridge beg for the treatment. But chess, be it remembered, is a science. It is as impossible to find psychic symbols in a game of chess as I once found it difficult to use chess for coding, when I ambitiously tried to write a novel of espionage using chess players as my characters.

It follows that no one is going to find in

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Fischer's moves any evidence of psychic disturbance. But totally irrelevant to psychology chess is not. Against the idea that chess is pure intellect, the Freudians have instituted a claim that there is no such function as pure intellect. But the Freudian can only succeed in the field where will power is affected by behaviour patterns. I offer them the experience of Tarrasch. Having opposed the entry of Yates to a tournament at Hamburg, he made, when playing the Englishman, an error which for Tarrasch was egregious. (He allowed a sacrifice of a Knight on e3.) This amaurosis (Tarrasch's term) may be accountable in volitional terms. Against an opponent whose admission to the tournament had been a defeat for him, he was inhibited from the effort which would have prevented error. So it may be stated that, whereas a functional insanity may have no effect on a chess player's mental function, yet anything that disturbs the volitional system can be deleterious to performance.

In the Fischer-Spassky match there may well be evidence that volitional factors can account for some play. Fischer started in a clearly disturbed and irresponsible state of mind, but became calm, and only lapsed later through occasional over-confidence or premature relaxation. Spassky, more clearly, showed signs of failure of confidence, and a faulty distribution of effort.

One causal factor may have been the shock when a player—whom he had three times defeated, who had never won against him, and was two points down—completely outplayed him in that famous third game. It is noticeable that from the third to the tenth games he played (to borrow Alekhine's image) "with the resignation of a lamb menaced by the butcher's knife."[3]

DID FISCHER'S PERSONALITY prevent Spassky from playing well? One is reminded of Lasker's complaint that Tarrasch had hypnotic powers. (Not that they got him anywhere.) All the evidence is that Fischer's behaviour at the board is excellent—and not calculated to disturb an opponent's concentration.

His "table [not chess-table] talk" about watching an opponent's ego crumble is probably untrue to him, and is accountable by educational defect; he has been brought up on American "comics." He presents no appearance of terror. That he presents the appearance of his own portrait by Picasso (not yet painted) would not disturb Spassky, who knows him well and has had uglier opponents. Only to a man in a bad position against him is Fischer an "ugly customer." His impact on the outside world reminds me of the impact of Paganini on Heine. The poet, being tone deaf, and with no conception of musical theory, could only report a facial resemblance to Mephistopheles.

There remains one question. Why has the Chess Crown, since the death of Alekhine, rested on Jewish heads (except when it was borrowed by an Armenian)? To say that that is because there are still many Jews in Russia is not a sufficient explanation.

My own theory is that Jews, through evolutionary processes, have become good at languages. To be good at languages, it is desirable to reach maturity early, and grasp the accidence and syntax and important vocabulary at an early age, so that while the mind is still young the student can express himself fluently and with mastery.

Among languages I include mathematics, music and chess. Different *inter se,* these systems are only grasped creatively by those who early grasp the technique. The particular Jewish control of chess is one instance of this process realised.

As for Fischer's control of chess, let it simply be said that from now onwards the phrase Grand Master is meaningless.

[3] The eleventh game, his only substantial victory, consequent on Fischer's adherence to a bad opening strategy, may have brought some relief. Certainly the games from the twelfth onwards (with the exception of the 14th which could have been played by two drunken Russian charwomen) constitute a chess match, with fine play on both sides.

After the extraordinary 13th game, somehow won by Fischer while his rook was completely imprisoned, the bad play in the 14th was understandable. In the atmosphere of shock Spassky's defence of the 15th game was desperately ingenious and is admirable. The rest of the match was creditable, errors being accountable in terms of fatigue. If Spassky plays as well in the return match as he did in the later games, Fischer will win less easily.

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London

ELEMENTARY: A £1.5 million bank robbery in Baker Street, London—home of Conan Doyle's detective Sherlock Holmes—was a real life copy of a Holmes story, the Central Criminal Court was told yesterday. As in the story "The Red-Headed League," thieves took over a neighbouring shop, dug a tunnel, and came up through the bank vaults, said Mr Robert Harman, prosecuting. In the story they came up into the arms of Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson—but in the real raid they got away with £1.5 million worth of cash and jewellery.

THE GUARDIAN

London

PYGMALION TYNAN STUPID: *According to certain members of the London Stock Exchange the decision to allow women to join the club (next March) is fraught with hideous language problems. Over the years, it is said, the men have developed their own S.E. jargon, a meaty mélange of barrack-room obscenity and four-letter levity, and this lingo threatens to damage the delicate ears and sensibilities of the girls. There are no synonyms for —, — and —, and members studiously avoiding such expressions would become virtually tongue-tied and emasculated.*

"If a chap can't say '— you, I'll — — 4,000 — STPs at 47 —' he might as well not be in business," a prominent jobber told me.

"It's not only the — language on the floor," he went on, "it's the whole nomenclature of the place that's at risk. Obviously, we'll have to call them broker-esses and adopt the female forms of such traditional terms as bull, bear and stag. Well, there's cow, of course, but the feminine of bear and stag don't readily come to mind though I'll bet they're pretty foul."

Asked to comment on all this a Miss Elsie Broderick of Mostyn, Mostyn, Rigg and Partners said "I've never heard such —, —, — in my — life. How Pygmalion, Tynan stupid!"

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

London

TOP OF THE SWOTS: *Our television screens [Stanley Reynolds writes] seemed packed with people trying to recall the name of the capital city of Bulgaria, just who Elia was, and at what school Cripple Dick Archer was the Head Boy. Where television chat shows were said to be murdering the art of conversation, the quiz programme may be aimed at killing off the club bore.*

The quiz show is one of the cheapest and easiest of programmes to produce, and if the quiz deals in questions of art, literature, history, music, or science, then it has the added attraction of being thought a serious, quality programme which will stay the hand of critics of television trivia.

When we come upon the serious quiz with intellectual pretensions beyond idle amusement something nasty seems to be happening.

Is it not harmful to present the instant recall of unrelated facts, to emphasize speed of response, to offer an entertainment based on these as being something not only educational in itself but the actual, measurable, product of education?

Take It or Leave It, *a literary quiz invented by Brigid Brophy, was chaired by Alan Brien. A paragraph or a verse would be read out and the contestants called upon to name the work and the author. The pleasure, apart from the delightful sight of a Know-It-All on the panel, was listening to the literary detective work as contestants thought out loud: Sir John Betjeman latching on to an adjective, relating it to the length of the sentences, and coming up with Henry James. Even if it were actually Henry Miller, the process was good to watch. And yet, there was something irredeemably middle-brow about it. The panel full of smart Alecs, pasty-faced literary gents, raddled critical ladies, bumbling and stuttering—just the sort of thing to make the philistine laugh.*

Education, intellectual achievement, wisdom and knowledge are all reduced to a head full of facts. Intelligence is being able to fill the two minutes against-the-clock answering time with the most right answers. In the meantime the viewer dozes in front of the telly content in the knowledge that the nation's brains are safely housed inside horn-rimmed swots and eccentric Dickensian characters.

THE TIMES

London

VOCABULARY: Two extremists addressed the Commons last night—Mr Roy Jenkins (Lab., Stetchford) and Mr Reginald Maudling (Con., Barnet).

"Extremists! What, Roy and Reggie? Come off it! They're the sort of sensible chaps who should be running the country—preferably in the same Government!"

But the extreme are not only to be found on left and right. These two men represent the extremism of the centre—the extremism of rampant orthodoxy.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

Cambridge

DO BE OR NOT DO BE: A reader thinks I may not have seen the graffiti in the gentlemen's lavatory at Cambridge University Library. Quite right. Here it is:

"To do is to be"—J. S. Mill.
And underneath in another hand:
"To be is to do"—Jean-Paul Sartre.
Rounded out by a third hand:
"Do be do be do"—Frank Sinatra.

THE TIMES

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LETTERS

Viet Nam

IN THE January ENCOUNTER Henry Fairlie says that George Meany was justifiably enraged at Senator McGovern's claim that there was "only one moral position" on the issue of the war. Mr Fairlie's point was evidently that the moral issues of the American war in Viet Nam are not so clear and that Senator McGovern was insufferable in claiming that they were.

It reminds me of an episode many years ago when the *New Yorker*, in an article on the *Reader's Digest*, criticised the anti-Semitic tone of a *Digest* article. The *Digest* commented angrily that it had also published a number of pro-Jewish articles. To which the *New Yorker* replied that it thought some issues had only one right side, and anti-Semitism was one of them.

As a matter of tactics, Senator McGovern was of course unwise in the way he dealt with Meany and other right-wing Democrats; the results of the election speak for themselves. But on the moral issue of the war there is no room for compromise. In aid of a cause that it has long since given up even trying to define, the United States has now dropped so much poison, napalm and high explosives on Viet Nam that by comparison Coventry and Dresden look like tea parties.

By all the moral standards commonly applied to define a just war, the American war in Viet Nam long ago crossed the line to irrationality and crime. Senator McGovern was right.

ANTHONY LEWIS

The New York Times,
London Bureau,
Printing House Square

The Ethnic IQ Gap

WHILE IT IS TRUE that Dr Eysenck does not argue the inferiority of black people, his generality, based upon statistical tests, takes this broad view, a view which while useful in a particular and limited scientific sense is socially unacceptable.

He himself refers to "Marxological revelation" and ties it up with book burning, boycott, and irrationality. Marx certainly did not advocate such things. Nietzsche certainly would not have approved of the Nazis, yet he was considered their mentor.

While Dr Eysenck would be the first to deny that that is his intention, he tends to take up abstract ideas which are merely tools for analysis, and then to treat them as if they are material realities. He says, for example, ". . . in addition to the Radical-Conservative axis there was also a Tough-minded *vs* Tender-minded axis. . . ." Again, this is standard scientific practice, and we know that there is no such thing as a material Radical-Conservative "axis."

Since language is itself speculative and manipulatory, it is necessary in some circumstances to give lip-service to prevailing doctrinal attitudes if one addresses large groups of people. Tocqueville understood this when he wrote about America. Even today many people are under the impression that his *Democracy in America* is an immaculate praise of the U.S. Very many Christian scholars today giving lip-service to popular Christian ideas are nevertheless doing work entirely at odds with the popular view.

The idea of race superiority is no longer an approved concept. Dr Eysenck himself rejects it as a means of social organisation and individual association. If he wants to use it as an abstract device of scientific analysis he must find a way to do so without appearing to do so. And this he has signally failed to do.

NIEL HIRSCHSON

Johannesburg,
South Africa

H. J. EYSENCK's "The Dangers of the New Zealots", published in your December 1972 issue, was an admirable account (for those who have not personally experienced it) of the techniques of distortion, omission, misrepresentation and *ad hominem* attack which a scientist faces when he writes honestly about genetically caused differences in intelligence among human ethnic groups.

When he discusses the policy implications of the findings he reports, however, Eysenck seems naïve. "As I put it rather colourfully in my book," he writes, "to concentrate on 'black dullness' is in reality a red herring—the real social problem is dullness as such regardless of colour."

From the standpoint of ameliorating the intelligence of the dull, this may be true; from that of society as a whole, it is false. If there were a concerted effort by government, by the academic community and by corporate enterprise to inject proportionate numbers of the most intellectually ungifted elements of the American white community into the best public schools, the universities, the professions, and the higher echelons of the civil service, Eysenck's generalisation would be correct. Up to now, however, nobody has seriously advocated this strategy to reward incompetence, jettison the principle of promotion on the basis of ability, and debauch the standards of the intellectual community.

In the case of the Negro, however, substantially this policy is being applied throughout the United States. The original 1954 Supreme Court decisions, which struck down racial segregation in the public schools, merely established the principle that no pupil may be denied access to a public school on grounds of his race—an admirable moral statement with which few Americans would quarrel. Through a somewhat stealthy process of encroachment, this principle of desegregation was transmuted into the very different one of the imposition of *racial quotas* to student bodies, faculties, government organisations, and even business employment.

Given the fact that the average Negro IQ is one standard deviation below the average White IQ, it was obvious that this quota system was incompatible with appointment on the basis of ability. Thomas Jefferson's view that the vision of American society should be "an aristocracy of achievement arising from a democracy of opportunity" was quietly swept aside. Intelligence, ability and ambition became utterly

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subordinate criteria, provided the applicant was Black.

The result has been the impairment of academic standards to a shocking extent and the creation of the preconditions for *permanent* racial strife in the schools and universities. Today it is common practice for American colleges and universities to give high grades to Blacks who would be failed if White, and to offer generous scholarships to Black students who would not under any circumstances be admitted into the university were they White.

Grasping the logic of the quota system, the Supreme Court has held that it is unconstitutional for an employer to base hiring or promotion on intelligence-test scores unless he can show affirmatively that these scores relate directly to the job. Is it also racially discriminatory for an employer to refuse to hire narcotics addicts and thieves? Is it race prejudice to want a labour force with enough brain so that it can be retrained for more responsible work when its current skills become technologically obsolete? Apparently so.

The encroaching quota system debases American leadership in all fields where intelligence is an essentially pre-requisite. If brain surgeons are appointed on the basis of colour, more brain operations will be botched. The quota system also spreads a peculiar moral rot of its own. If most Americans become convinced that advancement on the basis of intelligence, ability, and hard work is a sham, they will lose faith in their institutions. We are paying a large price for assuaging militant Black outrage and the masochistic emotions of intellectuals.

This is an area in which Dr Eysenck and those who agree with his findings might do well to grasp the nettle. It is useless to affirm belief in equality of opportunity without regard to race as common ground, when it is precisely *this* principle that the "civil rights" advocates seek to destroy.

NATHANIEL WEYL

Delray Beach,
Florida

"Imaginary History"

A Reply by PAUL JOHNSON

IN RECENT YEARS non-academics have produced some notable works of English history, which have enjoyed critical acclaim as well as popular success; and the trend has been resented by a small minority among our history faculties. So when I published a one-volume history of the English people, I expected it would be attacked by one of our more trades-union-minded dons. But I could not believe my good fortune when I saw, on reading last month's ENCOUNTER, that the self-appointed prosecutor was none other than the Gladstone Professor of Government and Public Administration at Oxford, Mr Max Beloff. Our paths have crossed before. In January 1964, when I criticised the Queen's handling of the succession crisis which followed Mr Macmillan's resignation as Prime Minister, I was severely rebuked by Mr Beloff, in his capacity, as he smugly put it, of "someone whose professional business it is to expound the constitution." On that occasion, I found it my business—and, I admit, my pleasure—to put him right on one or two elementary matters of English constitutional practice (*New Statesman*, 31 January 1964). Perhaps the Professor's wounds have healed; or maybe he is a glutton for punishment. At all events, he is back for more.

Mr Beloff's chief complaint against *The Offshore Islanders* is that I have written what he calls "an anti-European manifesto." This is a fantasy of his own contrivance. When I first discussed the project with my publisher, Sir George Weidenfeld (a passionate supporter of British membership of the EEC), nothing was further from our thoughts. What I planned, and he endorsed, was an examination of how a small people like the English, not generously endowed with natural resources, came to occupy so large a place on the stage of history, and to perform so striking a role in the growth of world civilisation; how, having accomplished so much, they then entered a period of decline; and whether that decline can be reversed. I carried out this mandate. It is what the book is about. Before writing it, as editor of the *New Statesman*, I had taken pains to ensure that the Common Market issue was fairly debated in its columns, and that supporters and opponents of British entry were given a full say. I was not myself radically committed to either camp. While preparing and writing the book, however, I came to see that the objections to British membership of a perpetual community inspired by French principles of jurisprudence and mercantilism were more serious than I had realised, and that such a departure would amount to a repudiation of the English political tradition. So, when I came to deal with this episode, I summed up adversely. But it occupies only a small portion of the book; and, far from trying to force history into the matrix of my own opinions, I quite properly allowed those opinions to be shaped by the facts.

Indeed, it is the Gladstone Professor who acts the didact and the propagandist. Being a man of leisure—that is, a Fellow of All Souls—he has ample opportunity to display his devotion to the Common Market cause. Wherever he can find an audience, on a public platform or in private conclave, he ceaselessly "expounds" the virtues of his concept of Europe. Not one who welcomes journalistic intrusions into academe, he has no misgivings about reversing the process. Articles and reviews pour from his typewriter—I almost said his presses. And, in extolling "Europe," Mr Beloff is not much concerned with ifs and buts. All is black and white in his eyes. For Britain to enter the EEC is salvation; to reject it is national suicide. The same post which brought me his diatribe also included

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an unsolicited copy of a tendentious magazine, called *New Europe*. Who, or what, finances it I do not know. Lord George-Brown, I read, is its chairman; and, inevitably, I found Mr Beloff among its contributors. Here, then, is not even a case of Satan rebuking sin, but of Beelzebub castigating pristine innocence.

But Mr Beloff is nothing if not robust—some might call it thick-skinned—once he has set himself an object. He calls my book "a novel", a "didactic novel", a "story told in order to teach a lesson"; it is "largely untrue"; "an imaginary history"; he accuses me not merely of selecting facts to suit my purpose but actually of inventing them. These are strong words; actionable words. If Mr Beloff were asked to justify them in a court of law, he would find himself obliged to present a formidable array of documented instances where I have deliberately and systematically suppressed, distorted or invented facts. Even before the court of public opinion, the Professor's reputation, such as it is, surely demands that he present pretty convincing evidence for his damning charges. At the very least, he ought to be able to convict me of innumerable factual errors.

NOW ANYONE WHO writes the history of a people over 2,000 years is necessarily vulnerable to the charge of inaccuracy. No one can be equally familiar with all the phases of such a huge tract of time. Mistakes will creep in. The sheer business of selection and compression must produce elliptical statements which can be presented as untrue. Mr Beloff has evidently subjected my book to close scrutiny in an endeavour to detect such faults. What, then, does he manage to come up with? *Three misprints!* All the rest of his detailed charges are matters on which scholars can legitimately disagree. Thus, on the slender foundation of three misprints Mr Beloff erects his indictment. Such a tactic, in an age when printing standards are declining, invites instant retribution; and Mr Beloff duly gets it. He writes, for instance, of "the failure of the 1964–66 Labour government." Must I, using his own methods, conclude that he knows nothing of contemporary politics? Or can it be that, the wish being father to the thought, Mr Beloff actually believes Labour lost the 1966 election? He ranks me "in the curious company" of Mr Correlli Barnett. In fact, as Mr Beloff could easily have discovered, I devoted 2,000 words in the *New Statesman* to showing that, in my view, the thesis advanced in *The Collapse of British Power* is quite untenable. What is more, he gives the date of the book

Echoes of Pushkin Square

By Valery N. Chalidze[1]

ON DEC. 5, 1965—*Soviet Constitution Day—a small group of intellectuals assembled in Moscow's Pushkin Square, displaying the slogans "Respect the Constitution . . ." and "We demand* glasnost (*public disclosure*) *for the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel!"*

Every year since then people have gathered on this day in Pushkin Square to commemorate those in confinement for speaking out in defense of human rights. Fewer and fewer people appear because many have been subjected to repressions, and now the question has become especially acute: will the movements in defense of human rights live on, or will the participants in this movement be imprisoned, exiled, intimidated, broken?

POLITICAL REPRESSION, *so terrible and widespread until 1953, was never completely discontinued in the U.S.S.R. Now it has intensified in comparison with the recent past and become harsher—three years of imprisonment is already considered a mild punishment. (I note here that Bukovsky was sentenced to seven years of confinement and five years of banishment). The intensification of repression and the related decrease in active efforts to defend human rights can also lead to qualitative changes in the character of political trials in the U.S.S.R.*

FOR AS LONG AS *nine months an arrested person can remain under investigation—up to nine months of complete isolation usually without visitors, without legal consultation and without mail; during this time an experienced interrogator can sometimes extract even from a person who is usually brave and steadfast, a confession of guilt, some expression of repentance and testimony useful for the investigation. There is reason to fear that trials where the defendant confesses will become more frequent. And then, perhaps, the principle of open trials will "triumph" at last: defendants will be so in tune with their prosecutors that it will become possible to publish verbatim records of trials as in the thirties (for example, the Bukharin trial).*

But the intelligentsia did not call for this kind of "observance" of the principle of glasnost *in Pushkin Square seven years ago. It is not surprising that they stressed this particular constitutional guarantee, for it is well known that a just cause does not fear publicity; ordinary people, and the authorities as well, hide only what is shameful and evil.*

BUT PERHAPS *my pessimistic thoughts are groundless? Perhaps improvement of the international situation will lead to a slackening of repression and a release of prisoners? Many hope this. Many always hope for this.*

Recently about forty prominent Soviet intellectuals petitioned the authorities to amnesty many political prisoners. I do not know whether this petition will help, but I do know that silence will not help to alleviate anyone's suffering, and that is why I believe that liberal intellectuals in the West will support this petition of Soviet intellectuals. And, as always, I hope that the authorities will adopt a

[1] *Dr. Valery N. Chalidze, a Soviet physicist and Expert-Member of the Moscow Human Rights Committee, is at present on a lecture tour of the U.S. at the invitation of New York University and Georgetown University Law Schools.*

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as 1971; in fact it was published as recently as Summer 1972; and, for good measure, he gets the name of the publisher wrong. For a man who aspires to play the pedant, Mr Beloff is not very careful about his homework.

Lacking hard evidence that my history is fiction, he falls back on innuendo. He says: "Mr Johnson only rarely gives reference for his views" (I suppose he means "references"). But most one-volume histories of England give no references at all. These include two Mr Beloff cites with approval: G. M. Trevelyan's *Shortened History of England* and Sir George Clark's *English History: a Survey*, both of which are longer than mine and cover a shorter period. In fact, I give references as often as is practicable; and, what is more, when I state a view particularly strongly, I frequently refer the reader to a work which gives a different interpretation. Mr Beloff throughout ignores the effort I have made to be honest with my readers, and to tell them when I am being opinionative. He takes objection to my portrait of early Dark Age Britain as a "Pelagian Island"—in the process convincing me that he is not quite as familiar with the period as he would wish readers of ENCOUNTER to suppose. But he omits to add that I state, at the beginning of this chapter, that my account is a "reconstruction"; I tell the reader that what I am trying to do is to "switch the angle of vision from the Roman to the British and to try to examine events as they would have been seen through intelligent British eyes"; and I point out: "The difficulty is that we have only scraps of information from which to compile an account of what happened; and any such account must be based to a large extent on interpretation, and even guesswork." If my purpose was, as Mr Beloff claims, deception, why should I have been so frank?

More disreputable is Mr Beloff's deliberate distortion of my methods. He quotes my words that, in writing general history, "A certain ruthlessness is required, a willingness to accept the responsibility of making choices and forming judgments, a readiness to select, discount and discard." He places this sentence in a context of his own devising, to make it appear that I am impervious to his charges of "inventing" facts and writing imaginary history, and that I shamelessly defend falsification in the pursuit of political aims. I am doing nothing of the sort, *as he very well knows.* I am simply saying that the sheer volume of historical research available today inhibits scholars from writing general history; that this is a pity, because it leads to an increasing divorce between scholarship and what the public will read; and that no one should be deterred from writing a history on this scale by his physical inability to read all the available literature. In this introductory chapter I make it plain that there are serious objections to my book; I set them out frankly and seek to meet them. All this Mr Beloff ignores, as he is bound to do in seeking to impugn my honesty. There is also, I now realise, a major weakness in one of my central arguments. It was dispassionately exposed by an astute reviewer in *The Listener*, Mr C. B. Macpherson. Needless to say, it eluded Mr Beloff entirely.

BUT ENOUGH of the Gladstone Professor; let him continue to "expound the constitution", and hurl paper darts from the casements of All Souls! History is too serious a business to be left to academics alone; I reject the claim that only a hieratic class has the key to its mysteries, and that its members must stand between the people and knowledge of their past, just as, in pre-Reformation times, the clergy exercised an exclusive right to the interpretation of sacred texts. The great bulk of historical work must, indeed, be carried out in the universities, and it is on the basis of these labours that the efforts of writers like myself largely rest.

But history should also be written by men and women of the world, by those who have participated in great events, or observed them from close quarters, who know what it is to feel the temptations and strains of power, and the responsibility for taking decisions which affect the lives of multitudes. And it should be written, too, by those with the power to communicate the excitement and relevance of the past to ordinary people. History is not a dead science: it is a living art, and an instrument for social progress and the advance of civilisation. It holds lessons, warnings, pointers;

realistic position and will grant freedom, or at least the freedom to leave the country, to those who, for political reasons, have been sentenced for actions which are not criminal according to generally accepted principles of law. But while victims suffer confinement, let them at least be remembered—those now in psychiatric hospitals—Grigorenko, Fainberg, Borisov, Gershuni and others. And those now in prisons, labor camps or exile, among them such well known protestors as Shikhanovich, Bukovsky, Krasin, Yakir, Lyubarsky, Krasnov-Levitin, Emelkina, Veil and Pimenov.

HOPES THAT THE AUTHORITIES *will adopt a more realistic position with respect to the problem of political repression may be well-founded, for recently the authorities have displayed a certain measure of realism in their handling of such problems as the repatriation of Jews and Germans. Regrettably, success in securing freedom to leave the country has so far been limited to such special cases, but it is important to note that this freedom, as well as the right to return to his country, is a fundamental right of man; the protection of freedom of movement plays an important role in promoting the free exchange of information and the growth of legal consciousness among people. And, in the final analysis, it is only through legal consciousness that constitutional guarantees of rights will become meaningful in people's lives.*[2]

[2] *Two weeks after these lines were printed in the "New York Times", two officials of the Soviet Embassy called on Dr Chalidze in his Manhattan rooming-house, asked to see his Soviet passport, and deprived him of it.—Ed. Note.*

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provides encouragement and rebukes despair; reminds us all that we do not live, as it were, on an island in time, but are the beneficiaries and victims of the dead, and that we ourselves will be held to account by posterity. This is especially true of English history, which has an unrivalled continuity and consistency. No one who wanders through the English countryside, visits its castles and abbeys, cathedrals, churches and colleges, its ancient homes and cities, and inspects the tombs of those who built and lived in them, can fail to catch some inspiration from what he sees. As Samuel Johnson put it: "That man is little to be envied whose patriotism would not gain force upon the plain of *Marathon*, or whose piety would not grow warmer among the ruins of *Iona*!"

History is a therapy: it has a moral as well as a practical purpose. Writing the history of the English, I found the mood of despondency about our future with which I began, slowly but triumphantly dispelled; and I acquired a renewed conviction that we still have it in us, as in the past, to make a majestic contribution to the raising of civilised standards, and thus to the happiness of mankind. I have tried to convey that conviction. My book, then, is not an "imaginary history", but one which seeks to appeal to the imagination—and the courage—of those to whom it is principally directed: the English people.

Max Beloff Replies

PAUL JOHNSON in his rather intemperate reply to my review of his book appears to be attempting two things. One is to discredit what I have to say by personal abuse of which I cannot be expected to take notice; the other is to defend the proposition that the writing of history should not be left wholly to dons, a proposition to which I assent. What he also seems to show is that the indifference to historical truth which is no more pardonable in an amateur than in a professional historian is more deeply ingrained in him than I had imagined. Or else, Mr Johnson does not know what the concept means.

Mr Johnson says that apart from three misprints "all the rest of [my] charges are matters on which scholars can legitimately disagree." Scholars may disagree about anything, but if they depart from the established views of the scholarly community they are bound to give their reasons. The only one of half-a-dozen specific charges that Mr Johnson attempts to answer is the one about Pelagius who figures repeatedly as the epitome of a "typically British" attitude of scepticism and tolerance. I pointed out in my review that this is the opposite of the position that modern scholarship assigns to the fiercely intolerant Pelagius. If Mr Johnson is as familiar with the period as he suggests why does he not give his reasons for disagreeing with Peter Brown? That is all he has to do.

Mr Johnson totally ignores the charge of error on ground much more familiar to most English historians, the period of the Commonwealth, where I point out his misrepresentation of the position of certain contemporary social groups. On a much wider issue he makes no reply at all to my charge that he describes the period of the later Stuarts as one of retrogression whereas it was one of unexampled technological and economic advance. This is not a matter on which scholars can agree to disagree. There is a large body of literature on the subject which goes to show my view to be correct. Mr Johnson must surely offer the reader some reason why he should ignore all this in favour of his own view.

BUT SINCE MR JOHNSON tries to give the impression that I must have been scraping the barrel to find fault with his book let me, rather than repeat the entire list of my original complaints, offer a new one. In his letter Mr Johnson makes much, and how rightly, of the amount of English history embedded in the physical monuments of our cities and countryside What has survived is important; much has perished, partly through neglect, partly through wilful destruction. Mr Johnson is above all anxious to clear his beloved Cromwell from any part in the latter. He writes on p. 211 of his book:

> "As for the stories of Cromwell's destruction of Church treasures and stained glass windows, they are pure invention, propagated by generations of High Tory clergymen."

Let us take Mr Johnson's own iconographic test. Anyone who has visited the Tate Gallery exhibition of "The Age of Charles I" will have seen a painting by Thomas Johnson (Cat. no. 177) dated 1657 in which "a parliamentary committee is apparently directing the destruction of stained glass and carved decoration." Should not one reflect upon this and ask oneself also why two eminent historians of English Art should write that

> "during the wars and the disturbances that preceded them the worst and most embittered prejudices found an outlet in sustained and organized iconoclasm." (Margaret Whinney and Oliver Millar, *English Art 1625–1714*, Clarendon Press, 1957, p. 6).

Nor is the evidence on this point recondite. In his standard work on Cromwell's Army, Sir Charles Firth, no enemy of Cromwell's, points out

> "that a picture of the Puritan soldier which omits to mention his iconoclasm would be incomplete." (C. H. Firth, *Cromwell's Army*, 3rd edition, Methuen, 1921, p. 331).

And he gives particulars of some of the destruction wrought by the army, for instance at Chichester and Winchester cathedrals. It is true that he adds that much of the "destruction popularly attributed to Cromwell's soldiers was really the work of agents of the civil government especially commissioned to remove all relics of superstition from the churches." These are the proceedings of which the Canterbury picture gives us a glimpse; but the qualification does not help Mr Johnson much, since by that time the civil government was in large measure Cromwell's.

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Mr Johnson is welcome to bring the passion of his convictions and the forcefulness of his style to the writing of history. He is right to remind us that history should be written by "men and women of the world, by those who have participated in great events or observed them from close quarters." One of these was Sir Winston Churchill, and it would be salutary if Mr Johnson were to reflect on the trouble taken by Churchill to make sure that the facts he was putting forward would stand the closest historical scrutiny. Precautions that were right for Winston Churchill cannot be misplaced for Paul Johnson. MAX BELOFF

All Souls College,
Oxford

"Jewish Panthers"

MR AMNON RUBINSTEIN ("Jewish Panthers and Other Problems," ENCOUNTER, June) is not well-informed about Sephardi Jews of Turkey. I am a modest Turkish woman. I will answer his article within my limits.

Sephardi Jews (exiled from Spain) were received by the Ottoman Empire and not by Greek or Bulgarian governments. Those countries were under Ottoman rule at that time. Besides half of the population of Bulgaria was Turks during this period.

Ottoman Empire, solicited by the Ghetto of Warshawa, sent the Imperial Fleet to fetch the Spanish Jews. First, they were settled at Smyrna in Anatolia, not in Greece or Bulgaria, this city being chosen because of its climate, similar to Spain. Moreover, when Greece proclaimed its independence all the Jews of Salonica left the country.

Consequently Turkish Jews are in great majority Sephardi Jews. They talk Spanish as well as Turkish. They are fair-skinned, green- or blue-eyed. Also there are some Ashkenazi Jews in Turkey. The Jews of Turkey are not illiterate peasants; they live in Istanbul, Smyrna and Thrace. Mostly they are well-educated and successful businessmen. AYŞE ONGER

Istanbul

New Co-Editor of ENCOUNTER

MR ANTHONY THWAITE is the new co-Editor of ENCOUNTER, replacing Mr D. J. Enright.

Mr Enright, who has been for two years co-Editor of ENCOUNTER with Mr Melvin J. Lasky, has taken up the position of Chief Editor with the publishing firm of Chatto & Windus, to whom he had been acting as part-time Literary Adviser. He will continue his connection with ENCOUNTER as a contributor and member of the Advisory Board.

Anthony Thwaite was literary editor of *The Listener* (1962–65) and subsequently of the *New Statesman* (1968–72). He was born in Chester in 1930, and educated in the United States, in Bath, and at Christ Church, Oxford. He served as a visiting professor in English literature at universities in Japan and in Libya. He is the author of several books of poems, including a selection in the Penguin Modern Poets series, has edited several anthologies (including the *Penguin Book of Japanese Verse*), and has published books on travel and literary criticism. He is married, has four daughters, and divides his time between London, Richmond and Norfolk.

AUTHORS

Anthony Hartley, for several years the Editor of *Interplay* in New York, now lives in London. His books include *A State of England* (1963) and *Gaullism* (Routledge, 1972). . . .

William Sansom's new volume of short stories, *The Marmalade Bird*, will be published by The Hogarth Press in the autumn. . . .

E. J. Mishan is Reader in Economics at the London School of Economics and Professor of Economics at The American University, Washington, D.C. Among his books are *The Costs of Economic Growth* (1967) and *Twenty-one Economic Fallacies* (1969). A collection of essays, *Making the World Safe for Pornography*, will be published later this year (Alcove Press, London, and The Library Press, New York). . . .

J. R. L. Anderson was for many years the Labour and Industrial correspondent of *The Guardian* and later its Assistant Editor. His books include *Vinland Voyage* (1967), *The Ulysses Factor* (1970) and *Reckoning in Ice* (1971). . . .

James Morris's articles for ENCOUNTER include "A Letter from France" (September 1972), "Out in Wyoming" (February 1972), and "Stones of Empire" (October 1968). Among his books are *Pax Britannica* (1968) *Oxford* and *The Great Port* (1970), and *Places* (Faber & Faber, 1972). The illustrations to "A View of the Royal Navy" are by the author. . . .

B. H. Haggin has been New York music critic for *The Nation* and for *The Hudson Review* and is at present record critic for *The Yale Review*. His books include *Music Observed* (1964), *The Toscanini Musicians Knew* (1967) and *Ballet Chronicle* (1971). A collection of his critical essays will be published by Horizon Press later this year. . . .

Gerald Abrahams, born 1907, was twelve times winner of the Lancashire County Chess Championships; he has also been Northern Counties Champion, and a prizewinner in the British Championships. His most recent book, *Chessays*, will be published this year by Allen & Unwin. . . .

April FitzLyon is the author of a biography of Lorenzo da Ponte and of *The Price of Genius* (1964), the first biography of Pauline Viardot. She is at present working on a book on various aspects of Turgenev's life and work. . . .

Joseph Frank is an American literary critic. He teaches at Princeton University, and is working on a study of Dostoevsky (his article on "The World of Raskolnikov" appeared in the June 1966 ENCOUNTER). . . .

William Woodin Rowe is the author of *Nabokov's Deceptive World* and *Dostoevsky: Child & Man in His Works* (New York University Press, 1971 and 1968).

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